University of Toronto Quarterly

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VOLUME XXV, 1955-6

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Review by M. ST. A. WOODSIDE

TOBER, 1955

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THE JANUARY 1956 ISSUE

ELSIE BUTLER, *Heine: Fragments of a Great Confession*
KATHLEEN COBURN, *Coleridge and Wordsworth and "The Supernatural"*
CLAUDE T. BISSELL, *A Common Ancestry: Literature in Australia and Canada*
A. S. P. WOODHOUSE, *Theme and Pattern in Paradise Regained*

SPECIAL ARTICLES ON EDUCATION

SIDNEY E. SMITH, President, University of Toronto; ERIC ASHBY, President and Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University, Belfast; D. L. THOMSON, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University; ROBIN HARRIS, University College, University of Toronto; N. V. SCARFE, Dean of Education, University of Manitoba; J. G. ALTHOUSE, Chief Director of Education, Ontario; P. GURREY, Professor Emeritus of English, University College of the Gold Coast; WALTER C. EELLS, Professor of Education, Stanford University, 1931–38, and Adviser on higher education, Staff of Supreme Commander, Allied Powers, Tokyo, 1947–51, etc.

Editorial

The QUARTERLY's new cover and typography—in "Times New Roman"—are not a gala dress put on to celebrate the beginning of its twenty-fifth year of publication; they are rather a fresh suit of everyday clothes, to be worn until they, too, fall out of fashion. There is, of course, no merit in mere change, but there are times in the life of any periodical when it is as well to reaffirm by an alteration in its appearance, its continuing vitality and adaptability.

As these physical changes happen to coincide with the appointment of a new editor, it may be necessary to reassure those anxious for the QUARTERLY's reputation that no radical change in policy is being planned. A tradition as well established as the QUARTERLY's would exact obedience from the most self-assertive editor, and to run counter to it would only prove his misunderstanding of its strength. The QUARTERLY will continue to serve the interests of Canadian scholarship, and as far as the republic of letters knows no "iron curtains," the cause of scholarship everywhere. The greater number of the contributors will naturally be Canadian, but contributors from outside the country will take their proper place, to heighten by their diverse views the general interest of each number.

"The cause of scholarship" is a phrase of sufficient finality to answer any question about the QUARTERLY's purpose, but like other orotund generalizations, it should not be allowed to stand unremarked. We might ask, for example, where is this cause maintained? "In the universities" would be the expected answer; but though the reply would be correct and satisfactory up to a point, it might leave one with the uneasy feeling that a cause of such significance should be able to count on wider support. In his retrospective article on the QUARTERLY, Professor Roy Daniells makes the disturbing remark that the first editors found it necessary "to live always within their citadel; outworks and practicable communications to a front within Canadian society there were almost none." The difficulty is not peculiarly Canadian. No periodical which serves the cause of scholarship, whether published in Canada, Britain

or the United States, can count on an audience other than the academic; the general cultivated public looks on it askance.

Before the public is criticized for its attitude, it would be as well to seek for faults at home. What distinguishes the great scholar from the pedestrian commentator, the dusty emendator, the dry expositor? The great scholar may comment, emend, or expound, but his passionate concern for his subject translates his activity into a quest, a revelation, sufficiently exciting to persuade any cultivated reader that though the theme may not bear directly on his daily affairs, it is not remote from his true interests. "Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor," Johnson remarked roundly, flooring a similar objection. Unfortunately, it has to be confessed that too many scholars lack passion. Their concern in their subject is entirely professional; they write for promotion and not out of love; and their attitude is betrayed by their graceless, unanimated style. The QUARTERLY has always tried to avoid such dullards, and it is to be hoped that it will continue to attract and publish contributors whose learning can give pleasure to any cultivated reader, whether within or without a university's walls.

It may be pertinently asked whether scholarship is so completely divorced from letters in general that the QUARTERLY could not make a more immediate contribution to the support of contemporary Canadian literature. The suggestion has been frequently advanced, for example, that it should open its gates to short stories and poems. The answer is simply that this could not be done without revolutionizing its character. There are obvious limits to any periodical's competence, and should it attempt to become inclusive, it will do nothing well. The question, too, fails to recognize the extent of the QUARTERLY's present service to Canadian letters. The annual survey, "Letters in Canada," which tries to judge the year's writing by the critical standards which would be applied to the literature of any other country, will continue to appear, in spite of the yearly protests against oppressive "academic" criticism from those of an avuncular disposition. Sound and regular criticism can do more to further the development of Canadian literature than the haphazard publication of a few short stories and a handful of poems.

To be twenty-five is to have weathered the worst trials with which life tries a constitution, and the earlier editors of the QUARTERLY are to be applauded for having carried it through the difficulties which inevitably beset it. They established it. A later editor cannot hope to equal their achievement, but at least he can try to have it said of him, that he had the good sense to follow where they led.

A Quarter-Century of the Quarterly

Roy Daniells

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. I Samuel: vii, 12

The feelings of this writer about the UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUARTERLY, now in its twenty-fifth year of publication, may be gauged from his having been a subscriber, with small if any intermission, since the beginning. The conventions of criticism, however, do not permit of simple enthusiasm; they "exact a full look at the worst": let us proceed then with proper caution and due depreciation.

In 1930 the venerable Chancellor of the University of Toronto, Sir William Mulock, proposed the foundation of a quarterly, wishing no doubt to give his own institution the advantages which Queen's had derived from its quarterly and perhaps desiring, in his great age, to plant an acorn from Toronto's "arbor aevo" to spring up and flourish beyond his own term.

The first editor was G. S. Brett, Head of the Department of Philosophy in the University. To virtues of scholarship, perceptiveness, and tolerance he added an Aristotelian excess of modesty which not only kept his name from the title-page but made him reluctant to press potential contributors for articles or to repress entirely the articles of impotent contributors. His services were great but his abilities led to demands upon his time incompatible with editorship; before the second volume was completed he became Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. A. S. P. Woodhouse and E. K. Brown, both of the Department of English, were appointed his assistants and from the third volume on the QUARTERLY became the product of their joint editorship.

The policy of the QUARTERLY was laid down in an editorial preface to the first volume. It has been part of this policy to have no editorials, and this first exception, together with one or two subsequent terse indications of new departures, are therefore of considerable importance. Brett's preface committed the QUARTERLY to its long endeavour "to contribute worthily to the common stock of knowledge: when the

scholar has achieved his task he must find some channel of communication, both to complete his own labour and to benefit others." Brett's remarks are brief and he clearly desired both to avoid controversy and to give the Muses uplift, not a strait-jacket. "The old ideal of a 'gentleman's magazine,' described by our forefathers as amusing because it was reminiscent of all the nine Muses, and instructive because it was concerned with serious topics competently treated,—this ideal is still perhaps the best pattern for a quarterly which is intended to be neither vocational nor technical and yet remains within the limits of scholarship and academic interests." Fiction and poetry were not to be attempted (though some poetry, even in the first issue, actually appeared); current affairs were similarly excluded. As a scholar and a philosopher, Brett had no intention of becoming snared in controversial issues or limited in any way to the local, the provincial, and the applied. The QUARTERLY was to find out the price of this decision in due course, but it proved worth paying.

The new editors, then, took over a periodical committed to scholarship based on academic research. This commitment they honoured and, beginning in October 1933, they added to the staple of learned articles a leaven of critical book-reviews, longer, fuller, and more explicit than those generally in vogue in Canada. This innovation was E. K. Brown's idea. His services to Canadian criticism and so to Canadian culture were often, as in this instance, unobtrusive but of lasting value. His untimely death in 1950 has left us all the poorer. The words of his co-editor are worth recording, concerning this period of the QUARTERLY's development: "He wanted to make the QUARTERLY a first-class critical journal. I was anxious that it should find a place also for what is commonly called 'scholarship,' so long as the articles dealt with ideas and were really well written. E.K. was prolific in suggestions for subjects and for possible contributors, including a few big names. He took charge of our 'external relations,' as he was so well fitted to do. I did the greater part of the editing in the narrower sense, preparing MSS for the press, etc."

The University authorities now decided that the QUARTERLY should enter the fields of public affairs and of science; Alexander Brady, of the Department of Political Science, and Dr. J. B. Elliott were added, as associate editors. The difficulty of maintaining these interests was, however, very great. Scientific articles virtually disappeared because the number of scientists able and willing to write in a style intelligible to the general reader was at that time very small. The difficulties attending the publication of articles on public affairs were more complex; at their root

lay the incompatibility of the tempo of current events and the leisurely movement of quarterly publication.

But although these interests, like creative writing (never represented by more than a spasmodic poem), tended to languish or lapse, a new and substantial feature was added in 1936—"Letters in Canada," an "account of the work done in Canada in a given year, in the different departments of writing, creative and critical." The annual purview, which came to include French-Canadian letters and often overflowed from the April into the July number, covered the humanities in the widest sense of the word, including at times periodical literature and even uncollected poetry, unproduced plays, and radio drama. To the critical surveys themselves were appended systematic and classified lists of publications for the year under review; for these (and much else) emphatic recognition is due to Miss Alison Ewart (Mrs. A. W. B. Hewitt), then general editor of the University Press, and to Miss Francess Halpenny, now its associate editor. These lists, gradually amplified in form, were continued until in April 1952 it was announced that the Canadian Bibliographical Centre in Ottawa had undertaken the whole labour.

In the earlier numbers the articles and reviews covered wide fields, within the understood limitations just discussed. The contents of volume IV range, on the literary side, from Sophocles and Seneca to Bergson. There are pieces on Lampman, Thornton Wilder, and P. E. More, to show that this country and continent were not disregarded. The non-literary articles amount to nearly a third of the whole number and range from Canadian Railway Problems to British Tropical Africa. Yet the mere count is misleading. There is a constraining unity of treatment, for the writers were predominantly academic and their point of view scholarly. Their treatment of subjects removed into the past is notably more comprehensive and happier than their reviews of current and topical matters, unconcluded and inconclusive. They are at ease in Zion but not in New York.

As time went on there were changes in the editorial board and changes in the emphasis given to various groups of subjects, but it may be said with certainty that policy has remained constant. When Woodhouse and Brown succeeded Brett in 1933, they, following Brett's lead, set a tone which was to be the keynote of all subsequent editing. Brown's departure for the United States did not terminate his connection with "Letters in Canada"; indeed his death strengthened his principles in the minds of his friends. The eleventh volume saw the welcome addition of

Philip Child, of Trinity College, to the committee of editors. A few volumes later, the name appeared of J. R. MacGillivray of University College, and volume XVII was the work of an editorial committee which has ever since been under his able and impartial chairmanship. By volume XX it included T. A. Goudge of the Department of Philosophy and H. S. Wilson of University College. The parts played by individual editors are not always clear to the present writer but it is clear that special tribute must be paid to Brady, who for more than two decades sustained with patience and skill the unenviable task of representing that group of interests broadly comprised under Political Economy. It was inevitable, given the initial concept of the QUARTERLY and the foundation in 1935 of the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, that the proportion of such articles should grow less. The most recent quartet of issues, from July 1954, shows an overwhelming preference for literary and philosophical subjects: from Marlowe to Thomas Mann, from Aristotle to Whitehead.

It would be quite false, however, and completely misleading to represent the editors of the QUARTERLY as designedly detaching themselves from the world of actuality to plunge into shades and reveries. On the contrary, it is instructive to see that Woodhouse (who is to the QUARTERLY what Gladstone was to British Liberalism, and has served as associate editor, co-editor, chief editor, chairman of the editorial committee, and chairman of the advisory board) insists, with robust common-sense, on the reciprocal relationship of past and present in the mind of the critic. "To be truly and productively cultivated three things are necessary, and three only. The first is to appropriate all the heritage of the past (or at least as much of it as can be compassed); the second is to see the present as it really is, unobscured by prejudice and by wishful thinking; the third is frankly to speak forth one's findings in one's own idiom." This declaration has its active parallel in an editorial review entitled "The Plain Man and the War," which commences, "There is a startling contrast between the simplicity and clarity of the immediate moral issues in the war and the jungle growth of confusing facts and ideas in which one finds oneself the moment the immediate issues are left behind." Driving away at the clarification of events and purposes, the review concludes with the hope, which fifteen ensuing years have only rendered more urgent: "Persuasion is not only democratic but social—it is an experience that fosters the spirit on which it relies; violence is the antithesis of both democracy and society. It seems possible that a nation whose citizens had really accepted the democratic principle at home might, as time went on, be willing to try its appli-

cation in a wider community whose members were not persons but states."

The materials comprising the successive numbers of the QUARTERLY are, then, at first sight diverse but on second view the result of a fairly consistent and certainly cumulative editorial policy. The number of unforgettable articles is, as one would expect, small; for example, P. E. More's tribute to Irving Babbitt in the third volume, a magnificently compendious piece of exposition. More surprising is the rarity of articles such as Louis MacKay's "On Reading Proust," in the second volume, where the critic treats his aesthetic experience as something in process and allows the reader to share his enjoyment "with all its twinèd flowers." There is a fair number of articles on education and a surprising number actually or ostensibly on the subject of religion, the result it may be hazarded of a deep perception that religion rather than economics or politics is at the very bottom stair of the Canadian consciousness. In sum, the primary concern of the QUARTERLY has always been the History of Ideas.

In this regard, the two tendencies conveniently represented by Woodhouse and by Brown separate only to recombine. Brown's interests were critical, but springing out of a well-informed sensibility. Woodhouse's ideas served constantly as sword and trowel. Brown inclined toward the techniques of the "new criticism," which his co-editor distrusted, but he was always ready to express his judgments of poems within a framework of larger values: "Careful interpretation, conducted with insight and a measure of sympathy, must precede judgment, and in writing of recent or contemporary poets it is much wiser to make sure that one's interpretation is adequate than to press on to judgment. . . . When I say that 1948 has been a year of exciting achievement in Canadian poetry, I mean that at least half a dozen poets have brought out books in which there are genuine poems which offer delight; I do not mean . . . that the Nobel prize was awarded to Mr. Eliot only because Sweden has not heard of our strength."

The History of Ideas as it is given shape by the framework of Western culture: such is the grand tour the QUARTERLY offers its readers and if, like the original grand tour, it has seldom stretched far east of Vienna, it has offered both a centre and a circumference. It has avoided, year by year, the technical, the polemical (with few exceptions), and the narrowly controversial. It has shown a massive, almost impassive, faith in intellectual humanism.

In reviewing the history of the Toronto QUARTERLY, one's thoughts turn inevitably to that other one, "so savage and Tarterly," and to its

rival. When in 1802 Jeffrey, Brougham, and Sydney Smith put out the first numbers of the *Edinburgh*, provoking the Tories to reply in 1809 with the *Quarterly*, both enjoyed manifest advantages denied to their successors. Their tone was partisan and designed for a clientele which, in each instance, soon numbered more than ten thousand subscribers. Praise and blame were their meat and drink. "Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur," wrote Jeffrey, and went on to his famous, "This will never do!"

They began in the high pulse of a revolutionary war. Napoleon rides through the *Quarterly*'s pages. They had intense political interests and strong religious connections. Whether the reviewer deals with the credibility of the Pentateuch or the Baptist Missionary Society, with Austrian State Papers or the Princes of India, it is clear that he is counting on the reader's immediate emotional response. Whatever is dealt with—Southey's poems, Sydney Smith's sermons ("such poverty of thought," said the *Quarterly*)—was of wide interest and was treated topically. These pages, yellowed by time, abound with invective, irony, sarcasm, and raillery.

The clientele of the *Edinburgh* and its London rival were the upper and middle-class possessors of real political powers. British self-confidence was at a high level. The reviewers could appeal to simpler, more positive minds than ours, minds unseduced by the "depthless intimacy" of today's illustrated magazines. The body of available knowledge was small and manageable. The early reviewers knew vastly less about their subjects than writers in the QUARTERLY. Brougham's versatility skated on the thinnest of ice. Of Jeffrey, Bagehot said, "He might not know his subject but he knew his readers." If the reverse may be said of contributors to the QUARTERLY it is not necessarily the lesser commendation.

The tactical advantages were all with the editors of a century and a half ago. They could assume a knowledge of Latin in their readers, the mark at least of a common schooling. We must today assume a three-way stretch of the reader's sensibility, into British and American, as well as Canadian, history; our critical prose bulges. Not for us the limited, traditional, homogeneous (though expanding) world of 1810. The times are changed.

The QUARTERLY was founded in 1930, on the verge of a depression, a depression of spirits as well as of markets. It had no natural, homogeneous clientele, the professional classes being strangely indifferent to ideas. If its literary and philosophical reviews seem remote and its economic and political analyses appear but tentative, they testify to the

materialism of society, the unformed institutions of a developing economy, and the state of international politics in the days of the League. It was necessary for the editors to live always within their citadel; outworks and practicable communications to a front within Canadian society there were almost none. The tactics of the B.B.C. *Listener*, which turns its caviar into a sandwich for the general, were impossible.

Criticism of the QUARTERLY's tactics has sometimes been true in fact but not in implication. Those who have written for its pages have generally been "catching the sense at two removes" rather than men of action. They have not, to use the modern term, "engaged" with the grinding wheel of affairs. They have—be it freely admitted—sometimes lost the urgency of ideas themselves in recounting their history. But in the large view these are signs of strength and wisdom, not of weakness and defeat. It is not easy in Canada to find a footing between a narrow provincialism and a large generality. It is notable that political parties successful in their own provinces have often little national appeal. The special circumstances which favoured the *Queen's Quarterly* were not present in the federated system of the University of Toronto and in appealing to the cultivated reader at large the editors deliberately chose to build slowly and on broad foundations, foundations still being laid. They expanded Eliot's dictum about poetry: "the whole tradition of Western thought ought to exist simultaneously in the mind." If they were too seldom controversial, they were often incontrovertible. Though neither always right nor uniformly useful, they made of the QUARTERLY more than a periodical; it has become an institution. They began in a time of dreariness and confusion but the pages of the QUARTERLY were at no time dreary or confused. They could have had a quicker success with a larger audience by placing emphasis on current works of fact or fiction. Or with a smaller clientele by devoting themselves to minute and fully documented research. They chose rather to demonstrate the vitality of the great tradition to the general humane reader.

In my childhood there were occasions when a survey of the past was made the prelude to a fresh attempt upon the future. These halting-places were marked by the public reading of a scripture, which stands at the head of this imperfect review, and there followed the singing of certain verses from a well-known hymn:

> Here I'll raise my Eben-ezer,
> Hither by Thy help I've come.

Some Seventeenth-Century Latin Poems by English Writers

Edmund Blunden

If even those who possess complete editions of the poets of the seventeenth century do not always explore with passion those parts of them where Latin and sometimes Greek verses are assembled, the gods surely do not grow angry. Such pieces come under the suspicion of being academic exercises, and many of them deserve it; some pretended to nothing more than the complimentary or incidental uses, and we today are hardly to be blamed if we do not spend time in working out their circumstances and catching their witticisms. Another cause for being disinclined to stay long in these areas is the labyrinthine look of much of the writing, and the unweeded garden of the vocabulary; those whose training in classical authors has been at all severe and select must recoil. Again—and this is a bigger thing—we have immediate access to the profusion of English poems from that celestially poetic age, and may reasonably reflect that we shall hardly have done justice to all those delights before we pass beyond present chances of imaginative enjoyment.

Weighing such things fully, may we not still enquire occasionally into these collections of verse in acquired language? It is not a final objection that they do not command anything like the admiration given to the earlier Latin poetry of the Christian church. To that abundant poetry with its hymnal majesty, its echoing innovations of rhythm and rhyme, the usual seventeenth-century Latin verse in England was not much related. We may indeed trace to another copious fountain of the older poetry the merry independent mind of Richard Brathwaite, whose early "Barnabae Itinerarium" came out in Milton's days. "The Latinists of the Renaissance," D. B. Thomas has written, "preferred—nay, insisted upon—the metres of Virgil, Ovid, and Horace; but Brathwaite, in spite of Oriel and Pembroke, spurned the over-deliberate, meticulously

finished verses of the Augustans to range himself with the vagrant gusto of the thirsty Goliards." And well he did it; but so far as my observation goes Brathwaite was an exception.

The epigram was a form which kept some of his contemporaries busy, as it had kept St. Thomas More. But these pieces are generally contrivances, and though Thomas Campion was skilful with them his lyrics leave them aside from the genius we seek in him. Of John Owen, who took his station among European writers on the strength of his much more numerous epigrams, I do not now speak; and indeed this topic leads away from my track. Donne's Latin pieces though epigrammatic are few, and mild. The following gives at least an agreeable impression of his personal life: its paradoxing was not such as to bewilder the recipient. The occasion was that Donne had lent a book to a friend, whose children had torn it up; but a transcript was made and sent to Donne.

TO MY VERY LEARNED FRIEND, DR. ANDREWS

What Printing-presses yield we think good store,
But what is writ by hand we reverence more:
A book that with this printing-blood is dyed
On shelves for dust and moth is set aside,
But if 't be penned it wins a sacred grace
And with the ancient Fathers takes its place.
Tell how, Apollo! children have supplied
To this new book old age, how sanctified.
No; that the sons of a physician thus
Could change its life is not miraculous.
If these can make young old, their father's art
Might agéd me into a youth convert.
But old age turns us ancient men (hard truth)
All back to children, not one to a youth.
Ancient of Days, that's Thy prerogative,
Whom seeing, Adam young again doth live.
Meantime we'll cheat our slow and weaker hours
With books and friendship's heaven-attempting powers;
Among which this small book restored by thee
Till now so dear, so mine, could never be.

Donne himself gave an English version of the Latin lines accompanying his present to George Herbert, with whom my subject at once opens out. This poet was of Westminster School, and Public Orator at Cam-

bridge—the fact of his being a regular author of Latin and Greek verses accords with those details. In these verses, which amount to about a fourth part of Herbert's whole extant works, a view of Herbert is found which is not quite that of the poems in English. The classical section consists principally of theological pieces, some of them in the old vein of invective; a few comments on public and topical interests; and the singular group "Parentalia" in memory of his mother. It is difficult to define the "Parentalia," for we have there a great love, an overwhelming grief, and the oddest ingenuity. The series begins with an intricate epigram completed in an anagram (*Mater* gives him *Metra*); here we are confronted with the assertion that if the poet in the heat of his lamentation were to dissolve into a black stream he would even so scarcely become ink fit for writing encomiums on his mother. At another time Herbert invites his mother's ghost to come and live with him in a cottage garden, nourished daily on flower-scents—and the passage has the feeling of truth rather than fancy. In these elegies, he appears "wild with all regrets" to a degree which probably he *could* not express in English. He even ascribes the occurrence of unusually rainy weather to the tears of England, Scotland, and Wales for his mother's death; the Pathetic Fallacy has seldom gone further.

From "Parentalia" I formerly attempted a few English translations, and it may now be allowable to interpret one or two of Herbert's miscellaneous Latin poems. He protested in them against those who already strove to kill church music, and those who hated men of learning.

ON SACRED MUSIC

Dexterous Deucalion, how was this,
When seas returned to their abyss,
That into man's shape you designed
Stones and rough rocks devoid of mind?

Rather, good friend, might'st now restore
Us to the stones we were before;
For very stones make some concents
With song and tuneful instruments.

'Tis told that stubborn rock and flint,
Pierced by such music's powerful dint,
Through wilderness and lake pursued
Orpheus so long as sing he could.

Down came the crags from steepest hill
When old Amphion used his skill,
Down to the town they scampered all;
Whence Thebes derived a city wall.

Man, only savage, nothing feels
That sacred choirs from churches steals,
Nay, blushes not so to be shown
Harder than even rock and stone.

O Music with all beauty blest
That the clear spirit nourishest,
Now whither bidst me? may I raise
By thee inspired thy song of praise?

Divine one, at thy touch set free
The soul sheds off mortality,
And wins again its heavenly home,
And stars ask what new guest is come.

Moses when all his foes were drowned
Returned in joy, and all around
His people at his fiery word
At once sang anthems to the Lord.

But what is this? I hear the Psalms,
The spirit's delicates and balms,
Wind-falls from heaven and sprinkled rains
Refreshful to these humble plains:

Songs which God's favourite David sings,
The towering pride of saintly kings;
His lute and harp according well
Help them to Zion's citadel:

The music charms the deeps afar,
And Jordan's waves astonished are
And hearing pause; which Tiber views
And with hid face his way pursues.

Can you, strange rabble! can you close
Your barbarous ears to strains like those?
That ye may make more space, no doubt,
Next those thumped pulpits ye tire out?

Prodigious 'tis when minds become
Each to our public peace a drum,
Abounding in discordant din,
Impeaching Harmony as sin.

TO PALLAS ATHENE

Virgin Athene, child of Jupiter,
Immortal glory of the highest sphere!
Thou whom the smiling Muses sweet
Of Latium and Pieria greet,

Unfold why death's arms constantly impend
Above thee or thy friends, and why thus bend
On them with such o'erwhelming weight
The blood-red orders of their fate?

Is death so strange and huge a monster then,
Masked with the blood of legions of good men,
That our Minerva's sword is broke
And fallen her shield whence strength once spoke?

Thou canst bend rivers; the blue sea one day
Thy swooping lightnings will have burned away.
Thy stroke of horror shall devour
The fleets of Ajax in that hour.

And thou hast cleft the Gorgon's hands clenched fast,
The locks inwoven with serpents, and down cast
The darkening bulk of that bloat foe
Enceladus, and Rhaecus' bow.

Nay, to the Muses conquered Cupid brings,
Blind child, with winged hand flowery offerings;
For those you tutor have no care
Whatever arms Bellona bear.

And Pallas answered me, and chiding said:
"What words are these? Prithee be not afraid.
Against just princes fate intends
No war; event will prove them friends.

And so when my own trees are lopped and thinned,
And haunts beloved lie bare to every wind,
When the slain branches yield no more
Those fruits that always grew before,

Then they shall hang there a sweet flute for me
Reborn in beauty from the shrivelled tree,
Giving as though in heaven 'twere crowned
Among the stars its perfect sound."

From Herbert's devotee Richard Crashaw we have a budget of classical poems—a third of his poetical substance, and quintessentially important. Archbishop Trench in his *Sacred Latin Poetry* (2nd ed., 1864, p. 271) annotated a verse on a bubble in the following bold manner: "Crashaw's Latin poem entitled "Bulla" can find no place here. I wish it might, for it is one of the most gorgeous pieces of painting in verse which anywhere I know—far more poetical than any of his English poetry, of which it shares the conceits and other faults." This "Bubble" is indeed a deliberate *tour de force* and yet one would say that a glory descended on the writer as soon as he began his frolic. I can only give here an impression of a few lines:

I am only the wind's brief trick,
A flower, even so, of the air,
A star, even so, of the wave;
I am Nature's golden jest,
I am Nature's wandering myth,
I am Nature's fleeting dream.
Of trifles the glory and grief,
A vanity learned and sweet,
Daughter to Aura the false,
Mother of light-born smiles;
A water-drop prouder than all,
Only, and luckier loam.

I'm the price of a hope that dissolves,
I am one of the Hesperian Isles,
The compass of beauty, of love
The eye that is blind and is bright,
And the light heart of hollow fame.

When we come to John Milton, we have the only example of these Anglo-Latin poets of three centuries ago who has not been much neglected either by critics or by translators. "The whole body of Milton's Latin verse"—I quote from my Hanford—"represents the finest achievement ever attained in this medium by an Englishman." It must always be a wonder to us that one man could achieve an elegy like "Lycidas" in his own language and almost at the same date the "Epitaphium Damonis." In Latin verse, as all who have a little of its classical grandeurs in mind may soon feel, Milton is the same organ-voice as elsewhere. He goes sounding on his way with none of that chanciness which even Herbert betrays as he fits together rather than composes his interesting thoughts; Milton's hexameter is a triumphal car. Even his ordinary talk has the resonance.

With all respect for those who have translated "Epitaphium Damonis" in rhymed couplets or with metrical parallels to "Lycidas," I doubt if Milton there sought for either of these effects. Artistically he would hardly be at ease in repeating what he had lately accomplished for an occasion that would not recur, though something like it did; to transplant "Lycidas" into Damon's ground would indeed have been an academic exercise. That he was thinking of other English poets as he composed these Latin lines seems not very likely either, but the refrain through "Epitaphium Damonis" may obscurely connect the composition with Spenser's "Shepheard's Calendar." It is best, if I may say so, to think that the poem in memory of Charles Diodati was in general a new poem by Milton and that the English metrical equivalent to its hexameters would be blank verse, not quite that of "Comus" nor yet that of the epic poems.

ELEGY FOR DAMON

Sicilian nymphs, for ye remember both
Daphnis and Hylas, and the long mourned death
Of Bion, through Thames' cities sing this strain;
Such words, such sighs as lonely Thyrsis pours,

And oft complainings wherewith he has stirred
Caves, rivers, wayward brooks and depths of woods,
Lamenting Damon, snatched from him; nor kept
His griefs from midnight, roving lonely lands.

And now twice rose the haulm with its green ears,
Twice came the golden harvest to the barn,
Since that last day bore Damon to the shades,
And Thyrsis came not yet: that shepherd still
Love of the Muse in a Tuscan town detained.
But when the full mind, and his absent flock
Recalled him home, and under the old elm straight
He sat, then, then he felt "My friend is gone,"
And thus began to unburden his huge pain.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Alas, in earth or heaven what powers to address?
Since they thus hurried Damon to his grave.
Leav'st us even so? and shall thy virtue pass
Nameless to mix with undistinguished ghosts?
But he whose golden rod disparts them, wills
Not so: to thy own order thee he leads,
And sets apart the dull and slavish herd.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
I say, unless the wolf shall see me first,
Thou shalt not waste in the grave unwept for: long
Among the shepherds shall thine honour stand,
Long thrive; and they, to Daphnis, then to thee
Shall their hearts turn, to Daphnis and to thee
Their praise, while country gods the country love;
If it means aught: an innocent, reverent faith,
Studies humane, and a poetic friend.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Damon, these things, these guerdons shall be thine!
For me what will be? now what constant friend
Will walk my way, as thou so often camest
In biting cold, through grounds deformed with frost,

Through fierce sun where the herb sank down in drought?
If need it was to encounter lions; if
To beat the clammed wolf from the upland folds . . .
Whose talk will calm my days now, or whose song?

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
To whom now may I trust the flock? who soothes
Consuming cares; with colloquy sweet beguiles
Slow night? when on the pleasant fire soft pears
Hiss, and the chestnut pops in the grate; the curst
Gale raves without, and roars in the elm above.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Or else in summer noon when Pan has found
In shadow of the beech his sleepy nook,
And girls reclaim their seats by sedgy streams,
And shepherds hide, and hedge-laid labourers snore,
Who brings me back thy pleasantness, thy smile,
Thy deeper wit, and elegance mature?

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
But now through field and meadow I pass alone.
And where the branchy shadows fill the dells,
I linger late, the rain and wind above
Mourn, and the stirred glooms of the shattered wood.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Ah, how my lands, once tilled, with headstrong weeds
Are tangled, and the corn-crop gapes decay!
The unmated vine withers, its cluster pines,
The myrtle groves not please; my sheep are dull;
But they look up and seek their master's face.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Tityrus calls to the coppice, and Alphesiboeus
Up to the hill-wood, Aegon to the pondside, Amyntas the fair
To the rivers: clear springs, mossy lawns, invite:
Zephyrs, the strawberry-tree and brook join songs:
I will not hear, but hide me in the shrubs.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Mopsus, who chanced to see me coming home,
An ornithologist and astronomer,
Cries, "Thyrsis, what is ailing you? perhaps,
Love's the sad cause, or some unlucky star:
Saturn with shepherds ever was at war.
With his slant line he probes their poor hearts still."

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
The girls surprised ask what my life will be.
"What's your desire?" they ask: "a young man's look
Should not be dark, and grim, and strict as this;
Youth looks for dances, frolics, and for love,
And he's twice luckless who finds love too late."

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
Hyas and Dryope came, and Baucis' daughter
Aegle the fashionable, musical, fastidious;
Chloris whose home is beside an Anglian river;
But all their charm and words were wasted on me;
What now may be, what next may be, I note not.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
See, through the meadow-lands the steers can play,
All of a mind, companions one and all;
Not one from all the herd selects one friend
In special; so in crowds the jackals feed,
And the wild asses shaggily congregate;
It is the sea's writ too; on the untrod shore
Proteus parades the seals; among the birds
The sparrow even has ever a mate: he flits
About the barley, careless: late comes home.
If death befall that mate, the hawk perhaps
Or ditcher's stick, another's promptly sought.
We are a sterner kind, and driven by fate,
A different, anxious and a restless race:
Scarce any among thousands finds his friend:
Or if at last, prayers heard, chance gives us one,
The abrupt day in the unexpected hour
Takes him and leaves an everlasting loss.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
What aimlessness drew me to unknown shores,
To pass through skyey rocks and snowy Alps?
Was it so much, to have seen buried Rome?—
Though such it were as he would visit once,
Tilyrus, quitting his own flocks and shire—
That I might lack so dear a friend as thee,
And set between us seas so wide, such tracts
Of forest, mountain, rock and sounding streams.
I might have held your hand at the last hour,
And seen your eyelids close in quiet death,
Saying "Farewell; heaven waits thee; think of me."

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
I do not shame to think today on you,
You Tuscan shepherds, young, the Muses' friends;
Kindness, and Grace; and thou my Damon too
A Tuscan were, bred by the Lucumon.
How lordly was I then by Arno's stream
Murmuring, and poplar groves, where grass was soft,
Gathering the violet, reaching the myrtle-bough,
Listening to Lycidas and Menalcas; I
Adventured too disputing, nor displeased
Greatly, as these your presents would persuade,
These pipes, these baskets and these cups; and then
They taught my name to their own beech-trees,—you,
Dati, and you, Francini, famed for mind
And word; of Lydian ancestry alike.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
The dewy moon said these glad things to me,
While I was busy penning my young flock.
So oft I said, but thou wast earlier dust,
"Now Damon sings his songs, or hunts the hare,
He weaves his osiers for this use or that";
All that with light heart I predicted so
I seized unheeding, fancied close at hand.
"And are you free? and shall we not go forth,
To loiter some time in the voiceful woods,
Out by the Colne, or Cassivelaunus' ridge?

Thou'lt speak of bents and their good medicines,
Hellebore and lowly saffron, bluebell leaves,
All that the marsh produces; healers' arts."
But may those herbs, bents, healers' arts all die,
Which benefited their master not at all.
For me my shepherd's pipe was sounding then
Some nobler note, and the twelfth day had come,
And from my lip the new song was to lift,
When the poor instrument quite failed; the bonds
Dropt, nor could deeper sounds be played; even now
I fear the attempt; ye must. O woods, submit.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
My song shall be of Trojan ships off Kent,
Queen Imogen that Pandrasus begot;
Brennus, Arviragus, Belinus old;
Armorica by Britons colonized;
Igraine with Arthur pregnant, dark-deceived!
The lying face; her husband's armour worn:
The craft of Merlin. Then if life remain,
Thou on the distant and ancestral pine,
Forgot by me, my music, shalt be hung;
Else altered shalt thou swell the nation's song.
I know not; all things are not for one man,
Nor may one man hope all; enough reward
For me and my abundant fame (unknown
Perhaps for ever, and to all the world)
If by bright Ouse, by Severn's eddying course,
By woody Trent, and Thames in chief my own,
And Tamar tawny with her ore, I'm read,
And Orkney with her Northern billows names.

Go home unfed, my lambs: I have no time.
These have I kept for thee 'neath laurel-rind,
These and more still, and Manso's wine-cups two;
Manso of Naples, admirable as they,
Round which he had devised this argument:—
The centre, the Red Sea, the fragrant Spring,
The long Arabian coast, the spicy woods;
The phoenix bird therein, that is but one,

Of a blue splendour and many-coloured wings
Past waves of glass eyes the ascending dawn.
And there heaven opens, and Olympus shines.
Look, Love with 's arrows painted on a cloud,
His torches sparkling, and his flamy shafts.
He wounds not here weak spirits, vulgar breasts,
But twisting round his blazing lights untired
Scatters them high in heaven, and stoops no lower.
Therefore divinest minds take fire, and gods.

Thou also there, my Damon, liv'st: for where
Should thy sweet, pure, and shining nature go?
Not Lethewards I look for thee amiss,
Tears please thee not, nor will we shed them more;
Hence, tears; the pure sky is his dwelling now,
Pure habitant who on the rainbow strides:
With heroes and with deathless deities
He drinks ethereal waters, his delight
Being holy. Yet, once received the rule of heaven,
Stand at my side, serenely aid; howe'er
Thou'rt named, my Damon, or Diodati
To the heavenly host: Damon in English woods.
And as thy youth was blushful chastity,
Faultless, and without carnal touch, so there
Thy praise shall be; thy brow with rosy wreath
Crowned, and thy hand bearing the leafy palm,
Forever thou shalt lead the wedding-feast,
Where in concent of songs and lyres and dances
Zion exults and revels without end.

Ivory Tower

Robert Finch

Few figures in the language of literary criticism have been more widely used and abused than that of the *ivory tower*. Invented, in its modern sense, over a hundred years ago, it became fashionable in the 1930's, popular in the '40s, and remains both fashionable and popular today. It has, presumably, not once but often passed the lips of any reader of these lines. It has engendered phrases that bid fair to become equally favoured, such as the *ivory laboratory* in which science segregates itself and the *ivory sewer* of dirt for art's sake. What is its background?

This is not the first time that the origin of the *ivory tower* figure has been discussed. In 1938 Professor Edman wrote in *Philosopher's Holiday* under "The Bomb and the Ivory Tower":

> I have certainly known the phrase, in its metaphorical sense, almost as long as I can remember. . . . I had never realized until a year or two ago that I had not the slightest idea where the label came from. I found it by accident one day, through the characteristic febrile enterprise of the magazine *Time*. That publication . . . wished to find out where the phrase originated, and lighted upon me. . . . I did not know nor did my colleagues whose specialties were English, French, or Philosophy. Nearly everybody thought Walter Pater was responsible, or possibly some of the French Symbolist poets. Finally somebody was persistent enough to discover the source. The metaphor was given currency in its familiar metaphorical sense by Sainte-Beuve's comments on a poem of Lamartine's called "La Tour d'Ivoire."

In the fourth printing of *Philosopher's Holiday*, Lamartine's name was replaced by that of Alfred de Vigny. Unfortunately, neither Lamartine nor Vigny wrote any poem of the kind.

Time's enterprise had been more febrile than, apparently, Professor Edman was aware. In 1936, a separately published booklet of letters from *Time*'s readers had quoted Professor Clarke of Yale as stating he believed the phrase was first used in French literary criticism by Sainte-Beuve about 1837. "In *August Thoughts*," said *Time*, paraphrasing

Professor Clarke, "Sainte-Beuve referred to Poet de Vigny's retreat to his ivory tower. So originated the 'ivory tower' epithet in relation to escapist literature." *Time* also quoted Dr. F. H. Vizetelly, "famed lexicographer," as having made reference in this connection to the expression "thy neck is as a tower of ivory" (Song of Solomon) and to the Roman Litany of Loretto where the words "turris eburnea" appear as a description of the Virgin Mary.

Professor Clarke's statement might lead one to believe the phrase belongs to the vast body of Sainte-Beuve's prose criticism. *Pensées d'août* (surely better translated *Thoughts in August*) is, however, a book of verse, and whilst the poem containing the phrase might possibly be described as literary criticism it is hardly such in the usual sense of the term.

The year after Mr. Edman had taken his philosopher's holiday, a less febrile periodical than *Time*—the *Atlantic Monthly*—published an essay (Jan. 1939) by the novelist E. M. Forster, entitled "The Ivory Tower." Mr. Forster wrote: "The phrase *The Ivory Tower* was first used, in the literary sense, by Sainte-Beuve, when he was examining the work of his friend and contemporary Vigny." True but over-impressive. The "examination" referred to consists of one and a half lines of verse.

"Vigny," continues Mr. Forster, "had led an active life, and when he took to writing he tended to withdraw from the hurry, noisiness, muddle and littleness of the world, and contemplate action from the heights like a god, or within a fortress where he remained unscathed." Eloquent but inaccurate. Vigny had indeed led an active life. He served in the army, from 1815 to 1827, but throughout those twelve years he wrote unceasingly. For the following eight years he served in the army of the romantics, playing a leading part in the literary and dramatic campaigns of Paris, still writing all the while. Not until 1838, at the age of 41, did he definitely leave off publishing.[1] Almost all his work, therefore, had been written *before* he withdrew from the "muddle and littleness of the world." The fact of the matter is that by 1838 Vigny had experienced tragedy in his private life. It was on this account that he retired from Paris to live in the country, and not because of any tendency to withdraw when "taking to writing."[2]

Mr. Forster's next statements are equally misleading. They read:

> To hit off this tendency, Sainte-Beuve borrowed from religion the phrase "La Tour d'Ivoire," the tower where the poet retreats *avant midi* before the heat and the weariness of the battle have developed. The phrase had been

used for centuries as a symbol of the Virgin Mary, and it occurs in the *Song of Solomon* but Sainte-Beuve first applied it to literature.

Could Sainte-Beuve have borrowed it from what Mr. Forster calls "religion"? Between the use of the phrase as a synonym for the Virgin and Sainte-Beuve's use of it, there can be, obviously, no connection. Correspondingly incredible is the notion that Sainte-Beuve borrowed from the Song of Solomon where the phrase refers exclusively to the beauty of a bride's neck. Finally, Sainte-Beuve applied the term, not to "literature," but to a man he hated. The towers of Solomon and of Sainte-Beuve, though built with the same syllables, are not identical. Sainte-Beuve is the constructor of his own phrase. What he wrote was not "the ivory tower," but, as Professor Clarke correctly quoted, "*his* ivory tower."

This article will attempt to show Sainte-Beuve's frame of mind when he formulated the phrase, and his conception of poetry which gave the metaphor, as applied to Vigny, specific overtones. It is therefore expedient to look at the epistolary poem in which it occurs, to see the phrase, with Professor Clarke, as "first used in French literary criticism" and, with Mr. Forster, to catch Sainte-Beuve "examining the work of his friend and contemporary, Alfred de Vigny."

The epistle, first printed in 1837, though probably written earlier,[3] is addressed to Villemain, the then pontiff of French literature. In it Sainte-Beuve tries to justify his verses, which he does in some 230 alexandrines, explaining his personal problem as poet, and clarifying his poetic style. It is in the first third of the poem (pp. 373–4) that the ivory tower phrase appears. Sainte-Beuve begins by stating his hesitancy as to which poetic path to take:

> Et bien que tout poète, en ce siècle, ait sa foi,
> Son château fort à lui, dont il est le seul roi,
> J'hésite. . . .

His perplexity springs from the fact that the best places have been taken and are still occupied:

> Lamartine ignorant, qui ne sait que son âme,
> Hugo puissant et fort, Vigny soigneux et fin . . .
> Tentaient le grand succès et disputaient l'empire.
> Lamartine régna; chantre ailé qui soupire,
> Il planait sans effort. Hugo, dur partisan
> . . . combattit sous l'armure,
> Et tint haut sa bannière au milieu du murmure:

Il la maintient encore; et Vigny, plus secret,
Comme en sa tour d'ivoire, avant midi, rentrait.

What is left for Sainte-Beuve?

Venu bien tard, déjà quand chacun avait place,
Que faire? où mettre pied? en quel étroit espace?
Les vétérans tenaient tout ce champ des esprits.
Avant qu'il fût à moi, l'héritage était pris.
. . . Sous ma triste muraille,
Loin des nobles objets dont le mal me travaille,
Je ne vis qu'une fleur, un puits demi-creusé,
Et je partis de là pour le peu que j'osai.

Though he talks primarily about himself throughout the epistle, Sainte-Beuve enjoys taking a poke *en passant* at the private castles of poets in general. But his reproach aimed at Vigny, deceptive in its gentleness, damns the latter for having published nothing in several months, and this right in the midst of his most prolific period (1830–5).

Why should Sainte-Beuve take the occasion of a personal justification to criticize, however briefly, one who was not only a fellow-poet but a bosom friend? Simply because the two men's erstwhile intimacy had by now reached a crisis which was destined henceforth to turn the lives of the greatest French critic and the most original French poet of the nineteenth century in diametrically opposed directions.

In July 1826, before the two had met, an unsigned article appeared in the *Globe* criticizing Vigny's novel, *Cinq-Mars*. Hugo, then Vigny's best friend, replied. Six months later, the *Globe* published an article in praise of Hugo's *Odes et ballades*. Hugo met the author, Sainte-Beuve, learned of his responsibility for the criticism of *Cinq-Mars*, and asked him to his home where Vigny was a constant visitor. Sainte-Beuve, though genuinely dazzled by the poetry of Hugo, had, as yet, no liking for that of Vigny. Hugo, however, taught Sainte-Beuve to see the beauties in Vigny's writing; it took him a year to help break the ice between the two men, but eventually Sainte-Beuve began quoting Vigny, his idol's friend. When he received Vigny's poems in which there was the message: "Serez-vous assez bon pour dire à mon cher Victor . . . qu'il invite M. de Sainte-Beuve à l'accompagner, lorsqu'il pourra passer un quart d'heure chez moi . . .?"[4] Sainte-Beuve was careful to refer to Hugo as "notre cher Victor."[5] The nuance was appreciable.

A few months later Sainte-Beuve published his epoch-making *Tableau de la poésie française au 16e siècle*. Vigny wrote him a compli-

mentary letter[6] which Sainte-Beuve acknowledged with good grace, signing himself "votre ami dévoué" and adding a message for Madame de Vigny. This was the prelude to happy enthusiastic friendship, the period of the Cénacle, when Sainte-Beuve and Vigny are on terms of the closest intimacy. Notes fly between them. Sainte-Beuve writes ecstatically to thank his friend for sending him the first volumes of his complete works, which, as it happened, opened with the novel *Cinq-Mars*. "Je vais relire maintenant *Cinq-Mars*," writes Sainte-Beuve, "et vous devoir une journée de bonheur."[7] Then having made amends for the damning notice of 1825, he even adds a poem (p. 63) in which he calls Vigny "divin et chaste cygne." When Sainte-Beuve's first book of verse appears, it is Vigny's turn to admire.[8] Next Vigny publishes new poems and Sainte-Beuve undertakes to spread their fame throughout Paris.[9] In 1829, Vigny makes his début as dramatist and Sainte-Beuve writes (pp. 259–61):

> . . . vous voyant tenter la scène . . .
> Ils se sont à l'envi remis à vous haïr. . . .
> On veut vous confiner dans ces régions hautes
> D'où vous êtes venu, . . .
> Où, loin des yeux humains, dans la splendeur de Dieu,
> Votre gloire mystique et couverte d'un voile,
> Apparaissant, la nuit, comme une blanche étoile,
> Ne luisait que pour ceux qui veillent en priant, ...
> Aujourd'hui, des hauteurs de la sphère sacrée
> A terre descendu, vous faites votre entrée.
> On sème donc, Ami, les pièges sous vos pas;
> Mais tenez bon. . . .
> Qu'importait à Moïse, admis au Sinaï,
> Contemplant Jéhovah, d'être un moment trahi
> Par Aaron, oublié par le peuple? Et quand l'onde
> Vengeresse noya d'un déluge le monde,
> La colombe choisie entre tous les oiseaux,
> Messagère qu'un Juste envoyait sur les eaux,
> Ne rencontrant partout que flot vaste et qu'abîme . . .
> N'avait-elle pas l'arche et le doigt de Noé?
> Ainsi vous, Chantre élu. . . .
> Et puis, un jour,—bientôt,—tous ces maux finiront;
> Vous rentrerez au ciel . . .
> Et vous me trouverez, moi, sur votre passage,
> Sur le seuil, à genoux, pélerin sans message, ...
> Adorant du dehors l'éclat du sanctuaire. . . .
> Si le signe certain marque ma face élue,
> Devant moi roulera la porte aux gonds dorés,
> Vous me prendrez la main, et vous m'introduirez.

Already the elements of the ivory tower are here, though with no hint of anything but approbation. The tower may be detected in "ces régions hautes D'où vous êtes venu," "Moïse, admis au Sinaï," "l'arche," "le doigt de Noé." Ivory is typified by the phrases "une blanche étoile," "la colombe choisie," "l'éclat du sanctuaire." But it is still 1829 and the sanctuary-door swings open to admit not only Vigny but his friend as well.

By 1831, after four years of closest friendship, clouds began to show. Until then, Sainte-Beuve had supported both Vigny and Hugo with equal enthusiasm. Suddenly he declared Hugo to be the founder of modern French literature: "Drame, roman, poésie, tout relève aujourd'hui de cet écrivain."[10] Vigny, offended, demanded a printed retraction, which Sainte-Beuve granted,[11] following it up with an affectionate note.[12] But the rift widened. In 1835 Sainte-Beuve described Vigny's poetry as belonging amongst "des produits rares . . . mais non pas nourissants; La perle . . . n'est autre chose . . . qu'une production maladive. . . ."[13] In his opinion, Vigny was a writer who had nothing more to say and who therefore ceased to interest. In 1839 he wrote: "De Vigny . . . a hérité de son beau-père une fortune. . . . Sa poésie d'ivoire y gagnera. . . ."[14] The break was not far off.

In 1840 Sainte-Beuve surveyed the past ten years of literary activity. Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine, Lamennais, Balzac, George Sand, Saint-Simon, Jean Raynaud, each had his paragraph. Vigny was not even named. Yet Vigny had been first in launching most of the great romantic themes. *Poèmes antiques et modernes* and *Eloa* antedate Hugo's *Légende des siècles* and *Fin de Satan*. *Cinq-Mars* is the first of the great French national novels. *Othello* opened the breach for *Hernani*. *Chatterton* established a new model for romantic drama. In every genre Vigny had said his word and set a decisive example, except in lyric poetry, and even so, the lyric Baudelaire, whose first poems appeared in 1840, was to prove his offspring. Few authors could offer such an array. None could claim to have made a greater contribution to the romantic cause. What was Vigny to think of the omission?

He had to think it deliberate, since the article's object was to rally writers to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in which all Vigny's writings had made their initial appearance since 1830. The poet first pointed this out to the director of the *Revue*, then sent Sainte-Beuve the new edition of his complete works. Sainte-Beuve's reply closed thus:

Croyez à mon admiration pour vos talents, à mon respect pour toutes vos

nobles qualités, à mon équité pour le reste, et aussi à mon désir d'une parfaite, sauvage et à peu près irréconciliable indépendance.[15]

His letter upheld with dignity the critic's freedom. But Sainte-Beuve could not let well enough alone and taking advantage of Vigny's election to the Academy in 1844, he openly ridiculed his former friend on the score of mannerisms and absurdities.

Obviously men who had reached this point had nothing further to say to each other. Sainte-Beuve concluded that Vigny had nothing further to say to anyone. In 1864 he wrote: "Il y a trois beaux silences chez les grands auteurs de l'antiquité. . . . M. de Vigny a trouvé un quatrième et non moins superbe silence: celui du poète."[16] Vigny broke that silence, after his death, when *Les Destinées* appeared. To some a testament of despair and pity, these poems were to Sainte-Beuve an unlooked-for token of failure and decline. Yet the poet's thirty years' retreat provided an ideal case to be studied by the psychologist Sainte-Beuve esteemed himself to be. That he did not explore it can only be explained by his active dislike of Vigny. His critical appraisal was, so to speak, blocked by the very tower to which he had consigned his enemy.

The importance of the possessive pronoun in Sainte-Beuve's phrase is evident. What about the adjective "ivoire"?

Sainte-Beuve was keenly interested in the eighteenth-century movement to replace abstract metaphysical and sentimental epithets with precise and picturesque ones. In a footnote to a poem (pp. 68–9) in which, by the way, ivory is mentioned, he quotes Diderot: "Une seule qualité physique peut conduire l'esprit qui s'en occupe à une infinité de choses diverses." Thus lakes with Sainte-Beuve were no longer smiling or melancholy but blue or black (p. 153, Pensée XVI). Such terms as these, however, are often found in literature, whereas "ivory" is rather rare. Shakespeare, for example, uses it three times, Milton and Tennyson twice each. Admittedly the word was popular with the French romantics—Vigny uses it five times and it occurs no less than twelve times in the comparatively small body of Sainte-Beuve's poetry.[17] But Sainte-Beuve was the one poet of the group who took no interest in the Gothic revival. No medieval odour clings to his ivory. For him it is the material of which a crucifix is made or on which his sweetheart's portrait is painted;[18] it is teeth, chariot-decoration, the substance of Penates; twice it describes surface texture of forehead and neck. But when he gives the word symbolic value, it is always with pejorative effect. Thus,

the instrument of leisure, "une lyre d'ivoire," is not for him (p. 33)—his "lyre" (*sic*) is a "luth d'ébène" (p. 31). It is another writer's vessel of verse that bears such foreign cargo as mother of pearl, incense, and ivory (p. 66). The twelfth time he uses the word is in the tower phrase of 1837. Here, at first, it is hard to detect disparagement, for in 1829 we have heard Sainte-Beuve call Vigny "divin et chaste cygne," and in 1835 he still depicts the movement of his verse as "une large pluie de lis qui abonde avec lenteur."[19] But in 1844 he writes:

> Cette poésie-là me paraît comme de l'albâtre assez artistement travaillé, mais pâle, sans couleur; la vie et le sang n'y circulent pas. Parfois on aperçoit derrière comme une rougeur due à quelque lampe artificielle, et cette rougeur aussitôt s'évanouit.[20]

In 1864 he reiterates, with emphasis and without qualification,[21] a criticism he had made more gently when in 1835 he wrote of Vigny's poetry: "C'est toujours de l'albâtre . . . mais c'est de l'albâtre légèrement *chagriné*."[22] Finally, he attempts to describe the workings of the poet's mind:

> Il est des sources dites autrefois merveilleuses, dans lesquelles si l'on plonge une baguette, un rameau vert, on ne les retire que chargés de sels brillants et à facettes, d'incrustations élégantes et bizarres: c'est à croire à une magie. . . . L'esprit de M. de Vigny ressemblait à ces sources. . . .[23]

Whilst "ivory," then, in the phrase of 1837, doubtless already contained what Sainte-Beuve would later declare the pallor and artificiality of Vigny's poetry, it also referred to his mental make-up and character as Sainte-Beuve chose to imagine them. In his journal, when he was first getting to know Vigny, he had written: "De Vigny a une première couche épaisse et luisante et comme enduit d'amour-propre; c'est dur à percer. . . ."[24] In 1855 he complained: ". . . M. de Vigny, depuis des années . . . et par une préoccupation de chasteté trop idéale et qu'il vaincra enfin, nous l'espérons toujours, se tient à l'écart, dans un recueillement mystérieux qui a passé en proverbe."[25] In 1864 he expresses annoyance at Vigny's reluctance to give biographical details or to accept prefaces to his works written by others:

> [Vigny] considérait volontiers tout appareil de ce genre comme une baraque au pied d'un temple; mais lui-même, et ne se confiant qu'à lui seul, il dégageait et dressait amoureusement sur son socle de marbre blanc une figure élevée, pure, une image sereine, chaste, éblouissante, austère et sans tache, sa forme incorporelle, si l'on peut dire.[26]

"Ivory," therefore, as applied to Vigny's character is, for Sainte-Beuve, the symbol of exclusiveness, secretiveness, and self-adulation.

Curiously, the word for "tower" also occurs twelve times in Sainte-Beuve's poetry. Five of these instances are passing references to towers he visited. A sixth (p. 253) is significant:

> . . . comme une lionne
> Qui, des ardents chasseurs repoussant les assauts,
> Tient contre elle serrés ses jeunes lionceaux,
> La tour tient à ses pieds toutes les vieilles rues,
> Et sur son sein les presse, et, debout les défend;
> Et cependant le Siècle, immense et triomphant,
> Déborde et couvre tout de ses ondes accrues.

For Sainte-Beuve towers are things of the past. Hamlet, his ideal poet, cannot remain "sur une tour obscure" but in obedience to the spirit's bidding must climb down in search of his destiny below (p. 55). In Sainte-Beuve's opinion, successful poets may prefer to dwell remote, on heights at least, if not in tower or private castle; he, on the contrary, lives far below them and is impressed with the contrast between their elevated position and his subjacent one (p. 65):

> Et jamais dans son cours leur gloire éblouissante
> Ne brûla d'un dédain l'humble fleur pâlissante,
> Le bluet du sillon.

Hugo he calls a soaring eagle, whereas he himself is a poor swallow caught in lime and destined for an iron cage, his emblem (pp. 49–50). Or similarly (p. 247):

> Je m'épuise à gravir la colline bénie
> Où siège Dante, où vont ses pareils en génie.

Is it not possible that he himself is longing for an ivory tower? For the time being, if at all aware of his desire, he is not prepared to admit it and goes on referring to his humble estate with scarce-concealed complacency (pp. 78–9):

> Laissons à Lamartine, à Nodier, nobles frères,
> Leur Jura bien-aimé. . . .
> Qu'aussi Victor Hugo, sous un donjon qui croule,
> Et le Rhin à ses pieds, interroge et déroule
> Les souvenirs des lieux; quelle puissante main
> Posa la tour carrée. . . .
> Bien; il faut l'aigle aux monts, le géant à l'abîme,
> Au sublime spectacle un spectateur sublime.

Moi, j'aime à cheminer et je reste plus bas.
Quoi? des rocs, des forêts, des fleuves? . . . oh! non pas,
Mais bien moins; mais un champ, un peu d'eau qui murmure,
Un vent frais agitant une grêle ramure;
L'étang sous la bruyère avec le jonc qui dort;
Voir couler en un pré la rivière à plein bord. . . .
C'est assez de bonheur. . . .

Sainte-Beuve's muses, too, harmonize with his avowed preference for the lower levels. His muse is not (p. 85):

la vierge ou la veuve éplorée,
Qui d'un cloître désert, d'une tour sans vassaux,
Solitaire habitante, erre sous les arceaux

but, rather, a poor, tubercular cottage girl whose sole care is her aged father. Or she is a disillusioned soul like himself, who flees with him to "un château gothique ou non, qu'importe?" (p. 112) not, however, for the purpose of reading together about "quelque beauté captive en une tour" but to study analyses of the heart in novels by Richardson or Mme de Staël (p. 113). Such earth-borne fancies are idealized in his dream of reunion with yet another disillusioned muse (pp. 76–7):

. . . deux sources d'eau vive en naissant égarées,
Arrivant au hasard de lointaines contrées,
Après avoir, aux bords des rochers déchirants,
En cascades bondi, grondé comme torrents,
Avoir vu sous les monts des voûtes obscurcies,
Baigné des lits fangeux et des rives noircies,
Lasses enfin d'errer toujours et de gémir,
Peuvent en un lac bleu se fondre et s'endormir. . . .

He ventures to chide Lamartine for soaring too much aloft and defends his own favouring of a less exalted sphere (p. 147, Pensée VIII):

. . . du milieu du paysage, tout en s'y promenant, ou couché à la renverse sur le gazon, on jouit du ciel et de ses merveilleuses beautés, tandis que l'œil humain du haut des nuages, l'œil d'Elie sur son char, ne verrait en bas la terre que comme une masse un peu confuse; il est vrai encore que le paysage réfléchit le ciel dans ses eaux, dans la goutte de rosée aussi bien que dans le lac immense, tandis que le dôme du ciel ne réfléchit pas les images projetées de la terre.

He even expands his idea into a criticism of French poetry at large, claiming that by its very nature it does not belong on the heights (p. 472):

La poésie des anciens, celle des Grecs du moins, était élevée au-dessus de la prose et de la langue courante comme un balcon. La nôtre n'a été, dès l'origine, que terre à terre et comme de rez-de-chaussée avec la prose. Ronsard et les poètes de la Renaissance ont essayé de dresser le balcon; mais ils l'ont mis si en dehors et l'ont voulu jucher si haut qu'il est tombé, et eux avec lui. De là notre poésie est restée plus au rez-de-chaussée que jamais. Avec Boileau, elle s'est bornée à se faire un trottoir de deux pouces environ au-dessus de la voie commune, un promenoir admirablement ménagé; mais les trottoirs fréquentés s'usent vite, et ç'a été le cas pour le trottoir si suivi de notre poésie selon Boileau. On était revenu (sauf quelques grands mots creux) au niveau habituel et au plain-pied de la prose. Aujourd'hui il s'est agi de refaire à neuf le trottoir, et on a même visé à reconstruire le balcon.

There are dangers, nevertheless, for those who remain sensibly on the ground. He warns an over-confident friend (p. 73) that in all his lingering in the dark under the trees he must be on constant guard against "les transports sans espoir" and "les rêves sans objets" which will reduce him to that last level of monotony where

> On est comme un pasteur frappé d'enchantement,
> Immobile à jamais près d'un fleuve écumant,
> Qui, jour et nuit, le front incliné sur la rive,
> Tirant un même son de sa flûte plaintive,
> Semble un roseau de plus au milieu des roseaux,
> Et qui passe sa vie à voir passer les eaux.

Inevitable disappointments, too, go with an earth-bound existence. In the country, should the sight of a happy home bring longings for similar joy, they are cut off by his return to the garish city; to cherish the dream would mean ultimate despair (pp. 56–9).

From the dangers and disappointments of earth, at times, he contemplates release. Death by drowning appeals to him and he pictures the moment in *Le Suicide* (pp. 36–40). Bidding poetry goodbye is a further means of escape, of which he no sooner avails himself, in *Adieux à la Poésie* (p. 45), than he hastens to reinstate the art, in *Retour à la Poésie* (pp. 53–4). He has discovered something deeper than watery depths for poetry to explore—the nethermost geography of his inner self:

> L'âme ressemble au lac immense
> De rocs sublimes entouré;
> Dessus, autour, ombre et silence; . . . .
> Que d'éclat derrière cette ombre,
> Et quel beau firmament reluit!

Plus l'œil plonge sous le flot sombre,
Plus il voit d'étoiles sans nombre
Dans ce qui lui semblait la nuit. . . .
Pour l'œil tout plein de cette image
Le soleil n'est plus que nuage,
Et pâle est la lueur du jour.

But such depths also have dangers and disappointments; he is not without qualms regarding the advisability of investigating them, and exclaims to a friend (pp. 98–100):

Ah! serais-tu . . .
De ceux dont l'âme tremble à des voix inconnues,
Et gémit en dormant comme un lac sous les nues?

adding this warning from his own experience:

Tu verras en ces eaux naître et fuir de beaux corps;
Et tu voudras nager, et bien loin les poursuivre.
On te dira des mots dont tout le cœur s'enivre,
Et tu répondras *oui*. . . .
Pauvre enfant qui plongeais avec une foi d'ange. . . .
Qu'as-tu vu sous les eaux? précipices sans fond,
Arêtes de rocher, sable mouvant qui fond,
Monstres de toute forme. . . .
Et quand tu reviendrais, par miracle échappé, . . .
Personne sous tes chants ne suivra ta pensée
Et de loin on rira de ta plainte insensée. . . .
Toi, poète . . .
Tu vivras à rêver sur l'éternel tableau,
A regarder encor tomber tes pleurs dans l'eau . . .
A voir aux flots du lac un soleil onduler:
Et l'affreux souvenir revenant s'y mêler
Gâtera tout . . .
Malheur à qui sonda les abîmes de l'âme!

However, in the preface to his second book of poems, *Les Consolations* (dedicated to Hugo because he unfalteringly walked along the path leading to the well which Sainte-Beuve called "le Puits de *Celui qui vit et voit*" and was therefore able to plumb all depths, including those of the book), Sainte-Beuve viewed excursions into these same depths more calmly, frankly satisfied at having had a subterranean-submarine period, but pleased it was now over:

. . . la crise passée . . . on se complaît à penser qu'on a plongé plus avant que bien d'autres dans le Puits de l'abîme et dans la Cité des douleurs. . . . On a été englouti un moment par l'Océan: on a rebondi contre le roc comme la sonde, ou bien on a rapporté du gravier dans ses cheveux; et, sauvé du naufrage . . . on s'enfonce des heures entières en d'inexprimables souvenirs

Sainte-Beuve may have felt that the work was that of one "encore nouveau venu à la lumière"; nevertheless, with reference to the book that had preceded it, he calls *Les Consolations* "ce qu'est dans une spirale le cercle supérieur au cercle qui est au-dessous." Now clearly conscious of an upward surge, he comes forth from the depths and is back to earth once more (p. 269):

> Ainsi, plongé longtemps au plus bas de l'abîme,
> Enfermé dans la fosse où je niais le Ciel,
> Ainsi le repentir descendait sur mon crime,
> Et je sortais vivant, pareil à Daniel!

Back to earth, but, as yet, hesitant to climb away from it, for (in the same preface) he observes that "On ne gagne pas toujours à s'élever, quand on ne s'élève pas assez haut"—"mieux vaut encore demeurer sur terre."

In his third and final volume of poems (*Pensées d'août*), for the first time, he openly confesses to and pleads for an earthbound but nevertheless modestly elevated sanctum of his own. The lines in which he does so are his reply to part of a letter, quoted at the beginning: "L'oisiveté est de l'ancien régime. L'isolement est un anachronisme. Avec du talent personne n'en a le droit." Thus, in 1837, at the very moment of recording Vigny's "retreat" into "his ivory tower," Sainte-Beuve claimed a similar refuge for himself (pp. 366–7):

> Assez d'autres suivront l'intérêt ou la gloire,
> Le bien public aussi, fantôme des grands cœurs,
> Idole si contraire aux Pénates d'ivoire. . . .
>
> Laissez, laissez encor quelques-uns, à leur guise,
> Tenir l'étroit sentier et cultiver l'oubli,
> Et haut dans la colline où la source se puise,
> S'abreuver de tristesse ou d'un rêve embelli. . . .
>
> Oh! que je fasse ainsi sur ma maigre colline. . . .

On this voluntary reversal of direction, is it any wonder that Sainte-Beuve let Vigny out of his tower, though but once? In 1846, some twelve or thirteen years after putting him into it, he wrote:

> Longtemps il s'est donc tenu à part sur la colline, et, comme je le lui disais un jour, il est rentré avant midi dans sa *tour d'ivoire*. Il en est sorti toutefois, il s'est mêlé depuis aux émotions contemporaines par son drame touchant de *Chatterton* et par ses ouvrages de prose, dans lesquels il n'a cessé de représenter . . . la lutte entre l'artiste et la société.[27]

Because of a few months' silence Vigny had originally been described as retreating to his ivory tower. He was released from it because he broke that silence. But when, subsequently, he remained mute for a period of some thirty years, Sainte-Beuve put him back into it again, employing for the purpose not only the substitute phrases already cited but many others—"sa voie lactée,"[28] "son nimbe,"[29] and so on.

What was Vigny doing in his supposed ivory tower those many years? Improving his two-hundred acre vineyard, constructing a brandy-still, producing the finest cognac in the Charente, attempting to found a public library, bettering educational conditions, producing Racine's *Esther*, taking an active part in local politics, and, his wife being a helpless invalid, attending to the whole business of the farm-house.[30] He had been enthusiastic about the property since first visiting there in 1823 and his friends, Sainte-Beuve among them, must frequently have heard him speak of the vineyard and its twin-towered fifteenth-century brick manor.[31] "At the end of the day," says a member of his household, "when the rest of us went to bed, towards midnight, M. de Vigny used to go up into his tower."[32] There he wrote the poems which Sainte-Beuve considered tokens of failure and decline but which are now counted among the masterpieces of French poetry. Sainte-Beuve, as poet, seems to survive only through the phrase by which he thought to imprison another.

In closing, it is to be noted that, despite Sainte-Beuve's return from the "abîme," despite even the wish for a "maigre colline" of his own, the lowest levels invariably called forth his highest eloquence. To see this most strikingly illustrated one must finally return to a section of the "ivory tower" poem itself (p. 374):

> On raconte qu'au sein d'une des Pyramides,
> Aussi haut que la cime atteint aux cieux splendides,
> Aussi profond s'enfonce et plonge dans les flancs,
> Sous le roc de la base et les sables brûlants,
> Un puits mystérieux, dont la pointe qui sonde,
> A défaut de soleil, s'en va ressaisir l'onde.
> En ce puits, s'il n'avait pour couvercle d'airain,
> Pour sépulcre éternel, son granit souverain,
> On verrait en plein jour, malgré l'heure étonnée,
> La nuit dans sa fraîcheur se mirer couronnée.
> Si les cieux défendus manquent à notre essor,
> Perçons, perçons la terre, on les retrouve encor!

Granite well, ivory tower. Is not the first the second in reverse, the one the mirror-image of the other? Unhappy Sainte-Beuve. Both are his.

NOTES

1 Cf. Baldensperger's note, Vigny's *Journal*, édition Conard (1935), I, 471–2.

2 See n. 30.

3 Sainte-Beuve, *Poésies complètes* (Paris, 1869), "Avertissement," 285–7. References to the *Poésies* will be from this point given in the text within brackets.

4 Vigny, *Correspondance*, édition Conard, I, 145.

5 Sainte-Beuve, *Corr. gén.*, ed. Bonnerot, I, 92.

6 Forty years later, Sainte-Beuve described it as "spirituel, mais interminable." *Portraits contemporains*, II, 82.

7 Louis Gillet, *Sainte-Beuve et Alfred de Vigny: Lettres inédites*, 39.

8 Vigny, *Corr.*, I, 174.

9 *Ibid.*, 176.

10 *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 30 oct., 1832.

11 *Ibid.*, 15 nov., 1832. He and Hugo at the same time exchanged insults about Vigny behind his back. Cf. Sainte-Beuve, *Corr. gén.*, I, 320, 322; Hugo *Correspondance*, I, 292.

12 *Corr. gén.*, I, 357.

13 *Portraits contemporains*, II, 55.

14 *Corr. gén.*, III, 136.

15 *Ibid.*, 294–5.

16 *Nouveaux Lundis*, VI, 442.

17 *Poésies*, 28, 33, 51, 66, 70, 83, 106 (twice), 162, 206, 366, 374.

18 The ivory crucifix is of extreme rarity before the seventeenth century; portraits on ivory appear towards the close of the century.

19 *Portraits contemporains*, II, 64.

20 Note on *La Maison du Berger* in *Chroniques parisiennes*, LXIII, 6 août, 1844, 244–5.

21 "Son albâtre était chagriné"; *Nouveaux Lundis*, VI, 426.

22 *Portraits contemporains*, II, 77.

23 *Nouveaux Lundis*, VI, 422.

24 "Notes et pensées," *Causeries du Lundi*, XI, 457.

25 "Sur Maxime du Camp," *ibid.*, XII, 8.

26 *Nouveaux Lundis*, VI, 398.

27 *Portraits littéraires*, III, 410.

28 *Nouveaux Lundis*, VI, 426.

29 *Mes Poisons*, 226.

30 Detailed accounts of Vigny's extraordinary practical activity are given in Léon Séché, *Alfred de Vigny* (1913), II, 373–404; Pierre du Chambon, *La Forteresse Charentaise d'Alfred de Vigny* (1931). For the best account in English, see Arnold Whitridge, *Alfred de Vigny* (1933), 189–204. Sainte-Beuve may, unwittingly, have owed moments of conviviality to Vigny's industry. What other poet has produced cognac reputed to be the purest on the market and purchased by Hennessey, then as today one of the world's leading brandy houses, at top price?

31 Cf. *Journal*, édition Conard, I, 9.

32 Séché, *Alfred de Vigny*, II, 392.

The Teaching of Literature: A Reply to Mr. Eliot

F. W. Bateson

The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism is a difficult, chaotic, and irritating book. Its critical virtue, I think, lies in the *obiter dicta* and incidental comments that are scattered haphazardly through its pages. There are also some illuminating and entertaining autobiographical passages. (My own favourite is the final trope: "If, as James Thomson observed, 'lips only sing when they cannot kiss,' it may also be that poets only talk when they cannot sing. . . . The sad ghost of Coleridge beckons to me from the shadows.")

A section in which the argument is more coherent than elsewhere, and which also possesses considerable autobiographical interest for the Eliot amateur, is the long note "On the Development of Taste in Poetry." The real subject of this note, as its first paragraph makes clear, is "the teaching of literature in schools and colleges." Can taste be taught? Or is it a faculty that is vouchsafed—or not vouchsafed—in the mere process of growing up? On the whole, Mr. Eliot makes it clear, he is *against* the teaching of literature. The general verdict, in the note's last sentence, is uncompromisingly sceptical:

> This note is really introductory to a large and difficult question: whether the attempt to teach students to appreciate English literature should be made at all; and with what restrictions the teaching of English literature can rightly be included in any academic curriculum, if at all.

If at all. Mr. Eliot's challenge is directed, apparently, against the whole apparatus of English schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, university English departments, with their lectures and tutorials, and English examinations from the General Certificate (or junior matriculation) upwards. And, although it was originally issued over twenty years ago, the challenge, as far as I know, has still to be met. Perhaps it cannot be met? Perhaps the "restrictions" would have to be so drastic that the

English sides and departments could not continue in business any longer? The vested interests may have preferred to pretend not to notice the exceedingly uncomfortable points that Mr. Eliot makes.

On the face of it, certainly, Mr. Eliot's case is a formidable one. It is not, essentially, that literature cannot be taught at all, but that it cannot be taught to the young. (As an experienced extra-mural lecturer Mr. Eliot must know that it *can* be taught, very successfully, to adults.) According to his note there are three periods in the individual's development of taste in poetry. The first period ends when he is round about twelve to fourteen years old. This is the stage, for boys, of "martial and sanguinary poetry," like Macaulay's "Horatius" or some of the traditional ballads; and it is almost universal. At or about puberty, however, a second stage sets in for a small minority of boys and girls. In Mr. Eliot's own case it was FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyam* that was the cause or the occasion of the metamorphosis. "It was like a sudden conversion; the world appeared anew, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours." This condition of ecstatic self-identification with the favourite poem or poet of the moment ended, for him, when he was twenty-one, and he then entered the third or mature stage in the enjoyment of poetry. It is not until this third stage is reached, according to Mr. Eliot, that an objective attitude to literature becomes possible, and that degrees of greatness can be distinguished in it. In the second stage all that can be expected is the ability to distinguish between genuine poetry and sham poetry The reading of poetry that is not congenial must also be deferred to the third stage. At the second stage immersion in poetry that is naturally uncongenial may easily deaden the reader's sensibility to poetry itself and result in a "sham acquisition" of taste rather than a "genuine development" of it.

It will be seen that Mr. Eliot's second stage, its nature, its duration, and its relative rarity, is the crux of his argument. If he is right in thinking that the only positive reaction to poetry by adolescents must necessarily be as subjective and emotional as his was, and that the condition may be expected to persist, virtually unchanged, from fourteen to twenty-two, there can clearly be little or no excuse for the teaching of literature as a special subject either in schools or at the university. All that the teacher could usefully do would be to see that copies of *Omar Khayyam* and similar works were easily available for the more "literary" boys and girls to intoxicate themselves on. In fact, however, as is obvious, Mr. Eliot exaggerates. In addition to the poetry-lovers, the ecstatic converts, every English class or tutorial has its poetry-likers,

the temperate admirers. And, in my experience, the objective and critical readers of Stage III are recruited about equally from each of the two types. In any case, literature is not co-extensive with poetry. If poetry cannot be taught, it does not follow that the drama and the novel are also unteachable. And Mr. Eliot's account of Stage II, as if it remained equally subjective and emotional all through the eight years, is difficult to accept. Instead of a straight line, with an explosive "conversion" at each end, there is usually a curve. A new and more subjective interest in poetry may begin to show itself between twelve and fourteen, but it does not often reach a zenith of intensity until sixteen or so, and by nineteen a rather more detached and critical attitude has generally begun to form. By the time he is twenty or twenty-one a competent student will often be able to make elementary distinctions of degree between great and less-than-great writers, and it should not be impossible to get him to read a poet like Spenser, who is not naturally congenial to mid-twentieth-century youth, without much danger of his sensibility being deadened.

But, if there are some exaggerations and mistakes in Mr. Eliot's analysis, their enumeration does not dispose of his challenge. Substantially, as every teacher of literature who is honest with himself will admit, he is quite right. It *is* only during his last year or so at the university that the ordinary undergraduate who is reading English is able to benefit from the elaborate attempts that are made to teach him what it is all about. The distinction between Stage II and Stage III may not be as abrupt and clear-cut as Mr. Eliot suggests, but it is a matter of simple experience that a psychological change of the kind he describes does occur. And the predominantly subjective attitude to literature with which the freshman arrives at the university does create a problem for university teachers that is too often evaded. The problem is one of communication. On the one hand, there is the condition described by Mr. Eliot:

> At this period [adolescence], the poem, or the poetry of a single poet, invades the youthful consciousness and assumes complete possession for a time. We do not really see it as something with an existence outside ourselves; much as in our youthful experiences of love, we do not so much see the person as infer the existence of some outside object which sets in motion these new and delightful feelings in which we are absorbed.

On the other hand, there are the adult, often middle-aged tutors, lecturers, and professors, whose professional duty it is to break into the student's private world and reorganize it. Being as a rule humane and

sympathetic persons, they set about their impossible task as tactfully and politely as they can. Passwords like *beauty, music, magic* and their more recent equivalents like *irony* or *tension*, are exchanged on both sides. There are encouraging gestures. But, because of the virtual incommunicability of the adolescent experience of literature, an element of sham pervades the whole business. The happy-go-lucky assumption that a sixth-former (Grade XIII) or an undergraduate must be responding like an adult, underneath his shyness, and that he can discuss what is going on inside his mind in intelligible terms, is unrealistic to the point of disingenuousness. It is time the conspiracy of tactful silence was broken.

What, then, are the "restrictions," to use Mr. Eliot's word, that need to be imposed, if the teaching of English literature is to continue in the curriculum? Although Mr. Eliot himself has no suggestions to offer, except perhaps to scrap the whole enterprise, his analysis provides us, as it seems to me, with an excellent point of departure. The essential function, it is clear, of an English department in the university must be to supervise and accelerate the natural process of transition from Mr. Eliot's Stage II to Mr. Eliot's Stage III. It follows that the final examination must be a test to determine how fully and by how many students the transition to critical maturity has, in fact, been effected. And any preliminary examination the university may institute must be designed to encourage the young undergraduate to grow out of Stage II, and into the beginnings of Stage III, as rapidly as is compatible with the natural psychological necessities of adolescence. The emphasis, that is to say, will have to be exclusively on the *objective* and *intellectual* aspects of the study of literature. The subjective and emotional aspects, being to all intents and purposes incommunicable, can be left to take care of themselves.

Mr. Eliot's scepticism was directed against the teaching of an *appreciation* of literature; he doubted "whether the attempt to teach students to appreciate English literature should be made at all." If "to appreciate" means, as it seems to here, to become consciously aware of the nature and degree of the particular emotion that has been released by a specific poem, for example, or a part of a poem, the scepticism was natural and justified. No mental exercise could be less suited to an academic curriculum. The more sensitive adolescent who is expected to parade his intimate emotional reactions before a tutor or an examiner inevitably becomes tongue-tied and embarrassed. It is a process that puts a premium upon glib superficiality and sentimental outpours. For,

unfortunately, attempts *can* be made to teach students to appreciate literature, and, if the teacher has a sufficiently attractive or dominant personality, the attempts are often disastrously successful. But what is appreciated, under these circumstances, is not the poem itself, or the play or novel, but the teacher's own appreciations of them. Nothing has done more to discredit the study of English literature than the second-hand emotionalism, with its clichés and affectations, that is picked up and vulgarized by the students of a "magnetic" professor.

The educational objective, then, is not, I suggest, appreciation but understanding, not the description of enjoyments but the analysis of meanings. In the process taste will generally be found to develop itself. It is the same approach, but to English literature, as the traditional approach has been since the Renaissance to Latin literature and Greek literature. The first requirement is a simple ability to construe, correctly and sympathetically, the surface sense of the texts studied. In the case of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, for example, to say nothing of *Piers Plowman*, Donne, or Blake, this is nothing like as easy as it sounds. In addition to knowing the exact modern equivalent of the unusual words, or senses of words, and the unusual grammatical forms, a good deal of logical acuteness is often required to make sense of a particular phrase or clause in its total context. And to translate poetry of any period into a natural and idiomatic prose demands an unusual degree of expertness in the writing of modern English.

However, the meaning of a work of literature cannot be confined to the surface sense. A poem, or a novel, or a play, is a linguistic whole as well as a series of separate sentences, stanzas, chapters, or scenes. It is only one step therefore from the prose paraphrase to "practical criticism" or "explication." To be able to explain the linguistic structure, or pattern of unifying devices, employed in even the shortest and simplest work of literature calls for considerable powers of intellectual analysis. I have sometimes wondered whether the interpretation of poetry (in the full sense of the term) may not be almost too difficult a subject to be included in an undergraduate course. But a similar objection would apply equally today to philosophy, physics, and economics. If the English school is to hold its own in a twentieth-century university it must provide a discipline that is at least as arduous, intellectually, as that in any other subject.

What, however, *is* interpretation? A more formal definition must be attempted. Perhaps we can begin by asking what is the relationship of practical criticism to the ordinary reading of literature? The act of

reading falls into four phases. The first or *sensuous* phase consists in translating the pattern of black marks on the page, or the sequence of sounds impinging on the ear, into the separate ideas that they symbolize. The second or *imaginative* phase consists in synthesizing the separate ideas, so that a single complex human situation becomes present in the mind. The third or *affective* phase consists in responding emotionally to the various aspects of the human situation presented. The fourth or *judicial* phase consists in assessing the poem's literary significance by a comparison of its second and third phases with those of other, similar poems. There are, of course, no absolute divisions between the four phases, and the first phase (with its appropriate discipline of the prose paraphrase) merges into the second phase (with its discipline of practical criticism), just as the second phase merges into the third (the province of "appreciation"), and the third into the fourth (which is concerned wtih the relative "greatness" of works and writers). Mr. Eliot is doubtful, as we have seen, whether the third and fourth phases can be taught to undergraduates. They should certainly not be in the forefront of the syllabus, especially during an undergraduate's first year or two. But I can see no valid reason at all why the first and second phases need be excluded or poohpoohed. If the teacher is careful to stop short of the third phase—which may be allowed to remain impenetrably private for all but the most mature undergraduates—nothing but good can come from a student's subjection to the intellectual rigours of interpretation. The discipline is interesting and valuable in itself, and he will gradually learn to make the necessary projections into the third phase on his own. At first, however, the two responses of public formal analysis and private emotional rapture should be kept as distinct as possible. The first *can* be taught, the second must be spontaneous and self-directed. A danger of the methods practised and propagated by Mr. Leavis at Cambridge, in my opinion, is of a premature penetration into the third phase; in some of his pupils, though not in all certainly, one is aware of a sensibility that has become over-rigid and incapable of much elasticity or variety. Their condition is preferable, no doubt, to the deadened sensibilities that are the product of prolonged exposure to works of literature that are not naturally congenial. And this suggests an important caveat. In selecting the pieces on which practical criticism is to be attempted the teacher must be careful to exclude, as far as possible, examples that are likely to prove uncongenial. On the contrary, the poems, plays, novels, etc., set for detailed study must always be those for which a third phase of private appreciation can normally be counted

on. Some famous universities are gross offenders in the choice of compulsory texts.

It may help to conciliate Mr. Eliot and his supporters if I return to the parallel with the teaching of Latin and Greek in this country during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Under Dr. Busby and the Reverend James Bowyer there was no damned nonsense about "appreciation." But, according to Coleridge, Bowyer at any rate was a convinced practical critic: "In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonyms to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text." And, in any case, the writing of Greek and Latin proses (and verses) is a mental exercise of the same kind as practical criticism. A prose reverses the normal order of translation, from a foreign language into one's own language, and substitutes for it the more difficult and analytical process of translating one's own language into a foreign language. Similarly, the practical critic starts with the known, i.e. the general surface meaning of the work under consideration, and breaks it down into the unknown, or the less familiar components of its meaning. Practical criticism is, therefore, the intellectual complement of the prose paraphrase. The parallel with the traditional combination of prose and verse composition and translation, prepared or unseen, is complete.

It is true there is not, as far as I am aware, a satisfactory text-book of practical criticism. Mr. Richards's treatise published under that name is a contribution to literary psychology rather than to literary pedagogics. We are indeed in the position the young Dryden and Coleridge were in when preparing their Greek and Latin proses. We have some useful elementary grammars, like the Brooks-Warren *Understanding Poetry* and its imitations, and the rest depends almost entirely on the teacher. For his benefit, and as there is some misunderstanding of the role of historical and biographical information in literary interpretation, it may be useful to summarize the critical issues that seem to be involved.

A work of literature is one that uses a particular combination of linguistic devices to bring out the general significance of a particular human situation. If the reader is to realize what the general significance is, he must first become aware (i) of the linguistic devices that are being used on this occasion, and their mutual reactions, and (ii) of the

human situation that is being described or enacted, with its geographical, temporal, and causal implications. A knowledge of (i) requires some familiarity with the language in which the work is written, and some acquaintance with the literary conventions employed in it. A knowledge of (ii) requires some experience of human nature and some acquaintance with the social order depicted or implied. Finally, the use of (i) to interpret or express (ii), which constitutes the literary response proper, requires some experience of literature and a certain minimum of common sense.

The procedure outlined in the preceding paragraph is one that every reader of literature must follow, in however primitive a fashion, if he is to read at all. But the difference between the common reader and the interpreter is only one of degree—degrees of self-consciousness, of perceptiveness, and of awareness of the relevant contextual information. Instead of a hit-or-miss knowledge of the English language and the conventions employed in English literature, he must know, or be able to discover (it comes to the same thing), the exact meaning and the precise relevance of the linguistic forms and literary devices found in the work before him. Instead of the common reader's rule of thumb acquaintance with human nature and human society the literary interpreter must be able to turn to psychology and social history, including perhaps some sociology. And in the final responsive stage common sense and experience may have to be supplemented by some formal logic as well as by regular exercises in practical criticism itself.

I do not mean that the interpretation of English poetry calls for a detailed and specialist knowledge either of the language and literature or of psychology, social history, and logic. All that is needed is a sufficient familiarity with these subjects to be able to get hold of the expert opinion or ruling on any problem that turns up. The special subjects do not need to be, and should not be, studied for their own sakes. Their function is merely that of a work of reference. In the progress of reading a poem two or more senses will often suggest themselves of a word, a phrase, or an allusion. The probability is that only one of them is right, the poem's original historical meaning, but which is it? Whereas the common reader can only guess, the trained interpreter, with the various techniques and sciences at his beck and call, should be able to know—and be capable, if challenged, of demonstrating his knowledge. It is this prospect of a progress towards certainty that gives interpretation its special value as a discipline. About taste it is always possible to dispute. Taste hurries over meanings to reach values. But the interpreter by

limiting the area within which he works and considering *all* the relevant evidence, can reach a consensus of meanings. "That is what this poem has always meant." And, nine times out of ten, for the adult reader at any rate, an agreed meaning will be found to bring with it an agreed valuation.

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In the preceding analysis I have not tried to say the last word about any aspect of the teaching of poetry at the university level. My object has been to take Mr. Eliot's argument as a point of departure and see where it led us. It has led us, I think, to two conclusions. The first a negative one: poetry considered as the reader's total response to a particular poem or group of poems *cannot* be taught. So far Mr. Eliot's scepticism is justified. But the first two of the four stages which constitute that total response *can* be taught. They can be taught because their methods and problems are primarily objective and can be resolved by conscious and familiar intellectual processes. That is the second conclusion, a positive one. And if it is objected that poetry with the emotional impact and the value-judgments left out is not poetry, let us admit it cheerfully. We are teachers, i.e. educators, and not, except by accident, the spiritual pastors of our academic flock. After all Latin grammar plays a very subordinate part in the adult reader's conscious response to the *Aeneid*, though Dryden and Coleridge would not have been able to read Vergil unless they had undergone the minute drill in it to which Busby and Bowyer subjected them. And that drill, distasteful though it may have been at the time, would still have been justified simply as mental discipline, if they had never read one more word of Latin after they left school. Today, however, Latin is a lost or losing cause. Its place as the central intellectual discipline of the contemporary school and university must increasingly be taken by poetry, the universal foreign language of the age of prose. Do not let us alarm ourselves therefore if some of the little brutes do not enjoy the poetry. Most of Dryden's and Coleridge's school-fellows will not have enjoyed learning Latin. But did their distaste for what was being imparted to them discourage their teachers? Did Busby and Bowyer ask themselves whether they were being successful in inculcating an "appreciation" of Latin literature? The idea would never have occurred to them. Their job was to see that the boys got the proses and translations *right*—correct not merely in terms of Latin grammar but of the whole relevant literary context. And *mutatis mutandis* that is the job of the teachers of English poetry today. Why then should we deceive ourselves, Mr. Eliot?

A Reading of La Saisiaz

— *F. E. L. Priestley*

For readers of Browning's poetry, *La Saisiaz* must always hold a special interest as one of the poet's most extensive personal utterances. It is seldom, even in lyrics, that he writes a poem so directly occasional, and so immediate in form. Here his more usual techniques of indirection, of speaking through a *persona*, of substituting for the personal situation a devised dramatic one, are abandoned; the reticence suggested by the separation of "House" and "Shop" is here pushed aside by the urgent compulsion of the poet's emotion. The occasion of the poem, the sudden and shockingly unexpected death of his dear friend Anne Egerton Smith, is close in time to the composition; the poet's emotion is fresh and near to him; it is neither recollected in tranquillity nor distanced by his normal aesthetic devices. There is consequently behind the poem a sense of private urgency, a sense of emotional excitement straining against Browning's habit of control. The dualism so well described by F. G. R. Duckworth, the tension between "speaking out" and preserving privacy, here takes on what is perhaps its most complex form.

In its general pattern, the poem moves towards a tightening of control; that is, towards reticence. It moves from direct expression of emotion towards a suppression of it, from the personal to the impersonal, and one gets the impression that the real theme is contained precisely in this movement, that the poem records Browning's *katharsis*, his successful emergence from shock.

The first section (lines 1–139) presents, as if by way of introduction, the direct experience in which the poem originates. The poet has climbed alone to the summit of Mt. Salève, overlooking the village of Collonge where Miss Smith is buried. It is only five days since her death. On that morning they were to have climbed Salève together, when Browning, looking for her to start the ascent, learned to his horror that she was unconscious and dying. As he now completes the climb alone, it becomes for him a symbolic act: the movement upward, each part of which reveals new scenes, new vistas, new perspectives, suggests the

journey of life; the poet at the summit has "dared and done," as his companion has "dared and done" with life. The abyss between the summit and Collonge suggests the barrier separating living and dead:

> Oh the barrier! yon Profound
> Shrinks beside it, proves a pin-point: barrier this, without a bound!
> Boundless though it be, I reach you: somehow seem to have you here
> —Who are there. . . .
> . . . Howe'er disjoints
> Past from present, no less certain you are here, not there: have dared,
> Done the feat of mountain-climbing. . . .

The recollection of the gay planning of the climb together, of the casual, affectionate goodnight, of the dreadful morning discovery, forms a narrative counterpointed by descriptions of the mountain scenes. A final recollection of Miss Smith's shy, diffident, affectionate nature completes the introduction by modulating to the main theme:

> You supposed that few or none had known and loved you in the world:
> May be! flower that's full-blown tempts the butterfly, not flower
> that's furled.
> But more learned sense unlocked you, loosed the sheath and let expand
> Bud to bell and outspread flower-shape at the least warm touch of hand
> —Maybe, throb of heart, beneath which,—quickening farther
> than it knew,—
> Treasure oft was disembosomed, scent all strange and unguessed hue.
> Disembosomed, re-embosomed,—must one memory suffice,
> Prove I knew an Alpine-rose which all beside named Edelweiss?

Her rich and charming spirit, known truly to few, can hope for no long survival in living memories; can it hope for other survival?

> Dared and done to-day
> Climbing,—here I stand: but you—where?

The elaboration of this question forms the second movement of the poem (lines 140–217): "Does the soul survive the body? Is there God's self, no or yes?" In shaping the question, the poet begins with two provisos: he will not shrink from the truth, "come in whatsoe'er uncouth Shape it should, nay, formidable." For he has no pretence (and this is the second proviso) to "pass off human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out of reach." His is "but man's truest answer," proceeding from weakness by weakness questioned; the truth he arrives at will be limited by

man's finitude: it will be truth, for "truth is truth in each degree," but it will not be ultimate truth as God sees it. It cannot hold the terror of ultimate truth, nor the splendour.

With these provisos, important for the further development of the theme, the poet turns to the problem. He recalls that only a week ago, he and Miss Smith had been discussing the Symposium, appearing in the *Nineteenth Century*, "On the Soul and Future Life." Their discussion last week had been gaily academic, objectively appreciative of "parried thrust, subtle stroke." The subject of the Symposium has suddenly ceased to be academic, the fence-play no longer play. The insistence by Frederic Harrison in the Symposium on a mere earthly immortality of reputation, a survival in mortal memory, as the only reality of "future life," seems now (as it had seemed in *Saul*) the offer of a poor substitute. Nor does the thought of a possible richer earthly existence for future generations give much comfort. As Huxley said, it would be little comfort to the extinct Eohippus to know that his descendant would win the Derby; Browning points out that even if such knowledge would be a comfort, it is denied him. According to the Positivists,

> There is but left for comfort, when the last spark proves extinct,
> This—that somewhere new existence led by men and women new
> Possibly attains perfection coveted by me and you;
> While ourselves, the only witness to what work our life evolved,
> Only to ourselves proposing problems proper to be solved
> By ourselves alone,—who working ne'er shall know if work bear fruit
> Others reap and garner, heedless how produced by stalk and root,—
> . . . we, creative thought, must cease
> In created word, thought's echo, due to impulse long since sped!

Nevertheless, repugnant as these conceptions are, the important question is whether they are true. "Truth is truth howe'er it strike," and the poet resolves to have an answer. It is important to note his words:

> I will ask and have an answer,—with no favour, with no fear,—
> From myself. How much, how little, do I inwardly believe
> True that controverted doctrine? Is it fact to which I cleave,
> Is it fancy I but cherish, when I take upon my lips
> Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare the soul's eclipse
> Not the soul's extinction? take his "I believe and I declare—
> Certain am I—from this life I pass into a better, there
> Where that lady lives of whom enamoured was my soul"—where this
> Other lady, my companion dear and true, she also is?

Three things at least are significant in the passage quoted: the poet will have an answer "from himself." He speaks of one answer but is asking two questions: how much he inwardly believes the doctrine? whether the doctrine is fact or fancy? And lastly, he puts the doctrine, not in plain terms as before, but in the moving and favourite passage from Dante which expresses his deepest feeling for his dead wife, whom he now links with his lately dead friend. With the question put in these terms, and with his proviso about the nature of truth in mind, the procedure of the rest of the poem becomes clear. The main section (lines 218–549) presents the answer.

Again Browning begins with provisos. The first (lines 218–65) has to do with knowledge, and thus elaborates and extends the earlier one. It also begins the specific answer to the question about fact or fancy. The very terms of the original question presuppose

> that the thing itself which questions . . . *is*, it knows;
> As it also knows the thing perceived outside itself,—a force
> Actual ere its own beginning, operative through its course,
> Unaffected by its end,—that this thing likewise needs must be;
> Call this—God; then, call that—soul.

Immediate knowledge of Self and Not-self, and of the independence of Not-self, are the presuppositions of knowledge. As presuppositions, they are unproveable. These are the original "facts," "the only facts for me." "That they o'erpass my power of proving, proves them such." All else follows from these facts; all else is construction of man's mind, efforts to deduce cause and effect. To these constructions, commonly thought of as the work of reason, and as knowledge, Browning gives the names of "fancy" and "surmise," illustrating by a series of contradictory arguments familiar to readers of theodicies, each argument calling up an equally plausible counter. These "old sad contentions" have brought to some "a half-escape: 'We believe' is sighed."

> I take the cup of comfort proffered thus,
> Taste and try each soft ingredient, sweet infusion, and discuss
> What their blending may accomplish for the cure of doubt, till—slow,
> Sorrowful, but how decided! needs must I o'erturn it—so!

All that can be certainly known is one's own experience:

> Cause before, effect behind me—blanks! The midway point I am,
> Caused, itself—itself efficient. . . .

Things may be as I behold,
Or may not be, but, without me and above me, things there are;
I myself am what I know not—ignorance which proves no bar
To the knowledge that I am, and, since I am, can recognize
What to me is pain and pleasure: this is sure, the rest—surmise.

This position leads to the next (lines 266–93): as the poet surveys his own experience, he is forced to the conclusion that it can exhibit no coherence unless this life can be viewed as probationary:

There is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught,
Goodness with triumphant evil, power with failure in the aim,
If—(to my own sense, remember! though none other feel
the same!)—
If you bar me from assuming earth to be a pupil's place. . . .

Again he emphasizes the proviso in the parentheses: "Knowledge stands on my experience" . . .

Here's my neighbour colour-blind,
Eyes like mine to all appearance: "green as grass" do I affirm?
"Red as grass" he contradicts me: which employs the proper term?
Were we two the earth's sole tenants, with no third for referee,
How should I distinguish? Just so, God must judge 'twixt man and me.

It is important to note the referee; while each man must seek the truth of his own experience, attempt to create his own system of coherence, this does not imply that truth is relative. It will be recalled that in *Christmas Eve* the speaker reaches a point of "mild indifferentism," ready to view all faiths as equally good, and that at this point the hem of Christ's vestment is withdrawn from him; he then realizes that he has been passing a judgment appropriate to God, not to man:

Needs must there be one way, our chief
Best way of worship: let me strive
To find it, and when found, contrive
My fellows also take their share!
This constitutes my earthly care:
God's is above it and distinct.
. . . I exult
That God, by God's own ways occult,
May—doth, I will believe—bring back
All wanderers to a single track.
Meantime, I can but testify
God's care for me—no more, can I—
It is but for myself I know. . . .

In *La Saisiaz* too man's task is to learn as best he can "what is beauteous and what ugly, right to strive for, right to shun, Fit to help and fit to hinder," to "understand so much as may be understood."

When now the poet turns to the task of judging the world of his own experience (lines 294–349) he finds it incoherent and irrational, filled with the paradoxes that disturbed the rational deists: Is God deficient in power, that his created world is so imperfect? or in will? The deistic attempts at theodicy offer no solution to Browning:

> Must the rose sigh "Pluck—I perish!" must the eve weep
> "Gaze—I fade!"
> —Every sweet warn "'Ware my bitter!" every shine bid "Wait
> my shade?"
> Can we love but on condition, that the thing we love must die?
> Needs there groan a world in anguish just to teach us sympathy?

If this life is all, Browning is forced to the conclusion that its sorrows outweigh its joys—still, of course, speaking for himself alone.

> Only my own joys and sorrows now to reckon real instead,—
> I must say—or choke in silence—"Howsoever came my fate,
> Sorrow did and joy did nowise,—life well weighed,—preponderate."

(This is not as unusual a conclusion as some might think; it does not mark a temporary abandonment by Browning of his "optimism." Throughout his poetry, from *Paracelsus* on, runs the theme that this life receives its value not from itself alone, but from its significant relation to the eternal.) If the general unsatisfactoriness of life were ordained by necessity, it could be endured; but the suggestion that it represents all that "a cause all-good, all-wise, all-potent" ordains is one that "reason most revolts at." The only condition that could reconcile the poet to the imperfections, sorrows, and frustrations of this life would be that it is prelude to something more perfect (lines 359–91):

> Only grant a second life, I acquiesce
> In this present life as failure, count misfortune's worst assaults
> Triumph, not defeat, assured that loss so much the more exalts
> Gain about to be. . . .
> While for love—Oh how but, losing love, does whoso loves succeed
> By the death-pang to the birth-throe—learning what is love indeed?

If it were so,

> —Worst were best, defeat were triumph, utter loss were utmost gain.
> Can it be, and must, and will it?

So far, the poet has worked to his original question: "How much, how little, do I inwardly believe true that controverted doctrine? Is it fact to which I cleave, Is it fancy I but cherish . . .?" But in the process he has clarified what "inwardly believe true" means to him, and has cast some doubts upon the simple opposition of "fact" and "fancy" as categories. As he now rephrases the question, he shifts the emphasis by substituting for references to himself (I believe, I cleave, I cherish) references to what would seem to be an external reality (Can it be, and must, and will it?) The reader will, however, remember the limitations Browning has set upon our knowledge of the external; the shift is rather from the poet's feeling to his thought; from his desires, to his attempt to see "his world" as coherent.

To the question thus posed, "fact" offers no answer; "surmise" alone is prepared "to mutter hope, and also fear" and to dispute "Fact's inexorable ruling 'Outside fact, surmise be mute!' " The principle that surmise should be mute (a popular version of *Hypotheses non fingo*) is well, indeed best, in those areas where fact itself can speak:

> Ay, well and best, if fact's self I may force the answer from!
> 'Tis surmise I stop the mouth of.

But what of those areas where fact itself is dumb? To the poet's urgent question, the world of fact returns no answer:

> Not above in yonder dome
> All a rapture with its rose-glow, . . . not beneath, where crickets creak,
> Birds assemble for their bed-time, soft the tree-top swell subsides,—
> No, nor yet within my deepest sentient self the knowledge hides.

Yet the question demands an answer, and the poet calls upon Fancy and Reason to wage "amicable war" and "play the foe" as his soul stands umpire. Browning's phrasing here is again significant. In *The Ring and the Book* he had taken the popular opposition of "fact" and "fancy" and ironically juggled the terms: "Fancy with fact is one fact the more." "Fancy," the poetic imagination, reaches to the truth beyond the facts, seizes on dead fact and makes it live. So again here he selects the vulgar (and empiricist) opposition of Reason and Fancy (vulgarly concerned with "truth" and "fiction," "fact" and "surmise"); his own view is indicated by his terms "amicable" and "play the foe'—Reason and Fancy in actuality co-operate in the search for truth, as the dialogue that follows suggests.

Fancy starts the dialogue by conceding "the thing refused," the "mere surmise that after body dies soul lives again."

> Two, the only facts acknowledged late, are now increased to three—
> God is, and the soul is, and, as certain, after death shall be.
> Put this third to use in life, the time for using fact!

Once again we have moved back to an earlier part of the poem, this time to the establishing of the two "facts" or primary certainties beyond which all else is surmise (lines 223 following). To these fancy has added a "surmise" which, conceded, becomes "one fact the more." The last line quoted just above suggests what Browning here means—"fact" is for use in life. The purpose of life is action; action depends upon a degree of coherence in one's view of the meaning of life. (One recalls Bishop Blougram's cabin analogy, Gigadibs' aimless incoherence and his final resolution.) Our knowledge being limited, we must supplement it, or indeed arrange its fragments, with the help of postulates which "go beyond the facts." Since these postulates are a vital part of the system of relations which turns "facts" into "knowledge," they can be properly considered themselves "facts" in the popular sense (which equates facts with knowledge).

This I think explains why Browning has Reason readily accede to Fancy's suggestion on the ground that "it promises advantage." From this point on in the dialogue, Reason suggests to Fancy what further postulates are necessary, approving each as offered. The bare notion of a life to come better than the present one naturally invites an immediate exchange of this life for that; it must be that there is a compulsion to live out this life, and one's state in the future life must depend upon conduct in this. Nor must this life be spent passively, or again it becomes meaningless. Finally, the guide to proper conduct, the moral law, must be sufficiently discernible to allow the exercise of judgment, but not so unmistakable as to preclude will and choice. Natural laws "enforce themselves": "to hear means to obey"; the moral law, no less powerful, is not compulsive: a man may see and praise the best yet follow the worst, "since he disbelieves In the heart of him that edict which for truth his head receives."

All these postulates or "surmises," granted as "facts," make human life intelligible; they represent, in short, what Browning finds a coherent explanation, based on his own experience and guided by his reason and fancy, of the meaning of life. Each item is necessary to the

explanation; apart from the first two "facts" the rest depend on each other. Break the structure, and

> all is empty air—no sward
> Firm like my first fact to stand on "God there is and soul there is,"
> And soul's earthly life-allotment: wherein, by hypothesis,
> Soul is bound to pass probation, prove its powers, and exercise
> Sense and thought on fact, and then, from fact educing fit surmise,
> Ask itself, and of itself have solely answer, "Does the scope
> Earth affords of fact to judge by warrant future fear or hope?"

As the poet notes, we are back at the original question:

> Thus have we come back full circle: fancy's footsteps one by one
> Go their round conducting reason to the point where they begun. . . .

But the answer has really been given. Can the answer be *proved*? Can the first "facts" be proved? "That they o'erpass my power of proving, proves them such." Certainty of the kind associated with physical fact would not make the scheme of life more significant, but less so; for Lazarus, in *An Epistle . . . of Karshish*, certainty has deprived this life of meaning—he is entirely passive; deprived of real choice, seeing things no longer in human perspective but *sub specie aeternitatis*, he is no longer strictly human.

> Assurance may not be
> If, supplanting hope, assurance needs must change this life to me.
> So, I hope—no more than hope, but hope—no less than hope. . . .

In the strictly human state, with life and laws judged as well as man may, "Hope the arrowy, just as constant," comes to pierce the gloom,

> compelled
> By a power and by a purpose which, if no one else beheld,
> I behold in life, so—hope!

The force of this passage, the conclusion to the main part of the poem, derives from the modest "no more than hope" followed at once by the emphatic "no less than hope," and the rising sweep of the lines to the trumpeted final "hope!" A double purpose is served by the proviso "if no one else beheld"—it creates a suspension to precede the blunt "I behold," and consequently adds to the rhetorical power; and it reminds the reader of an important element in the theme throughout: "His own world for every mortal."

It is this element which leads into the *coda*. The poet becomes, as it were, aware of his audience; he imagines their comment:

Sad summing-up of all to say!
Athanasius contra mundum, why should he hope more than they?

He recognizes that some or many will read his poem for its "message," will look to it to influence their own passive natures:

So are men made notwithstanding, such magnetic virtue darts
From each head their fancy haloes to their unresisting hearts!

From the height of the mountain he can look down to the very places where Rousseau and Byron walked; he finds in their influence examples of this "magnetic virtue." What their haloed heads darted to mankind, their "gospel-news," was a message of despair: Rousseau's,

"All that's good is gone and past;
Bad and worse still grows the present, and the worst of all comes last:
Which believe—for I believe it. . . ."

Byron's,

"Dying day with dolphin-hues!
. . . Ye mounts
Where I climb to 'scape my fellow, and thou sea wherein he counts
Not one inch of vile dominion! What were your especial worth
Failed ye to enforce the maxim 'Of all objects found on earth
Man is meanest. . . .'
Which believe—for I believe it!"

Such is the comfort man received, sadly but perforce, from these. Perforce for why? "The famous bard believed!"

The contempt in the lines is unmistakable enough, even to a reader who failed to remember Browning's persistent belief that each man must hammer out his own faith and philosophy, not adopt it passively because of the fame of an advocate. For Browning, belief "perforce" is no faith: compare his explanation in *A Death in the Desert* that miracles soon become void "because too much: they would compel, not help." Remembering "so are men made notwithstanding," Browning is moved to an ironic revelation: if only he could have for a moment the fame of a Rousseau or a Byron, could wave his giant torch on high, what great message would he now give the passive listeners to store up in their unresisting hearts"? Those who "find significance in fireworks" may, by the poet's help,

Confidently lay to heart and lock in head their life long—this:
"He there with the brand flamboyant, broad o'er night's forlorn abyss,
Crowned by prose and verse; and wielding, with Wit's bauble,
Learning's rod . . .
Well? Why, he at least believed in Soul, was very sure of God."

The message he gives them is knowledge of the two first "facts," the two immediate certainties which all men have, the two from which he himself started and upon which he built his "superstructure." Let each man go and do likewise. Browning's faith is hammered out from his own experience; it represents what the world looks like to him; he does not expect it to fit other experiences, or particularly wish it to. He finds the meaning of life in the task of "solving the problem: 'From thine apprehended scheme of things, deduce Praise or blame of its contriver. . . .' " The meaning is not to be found in an attempt to look up the answer in Browning's book.

After this ironic glance to the reader, the poet turns back to a short *envoi*. In it he describes the poem as a chain of thoughts, and what he says about the chain is highly suggestive:

Not so loosely thoughts were linked,
Six weeks since as I, descending in the sunset from Salève,
Found the chain, I seemed to forge there, flawless till it reached your grave,—
Not so filmy was the texture, but I bore it in my breast
Safe thus far. And since I found a something in me would not rest
Till I, link by link, unravelled any tangle of the chain,
—Here it lies, for much or little! I have lived all o'er again
That last pregnant hour: I saved it, just as I could save a root
Disinterred for re-interment when the time best helps to shoot.
Life is stocked with germs of torpid life; but may I never wake
Those of mine whose resurrection could not be without earthquake!
Rest all such, unraised for ever! Be this, sad yet sweet, the sole
Memory evoked from slumber! Least part this: then what the whole?

The poem has, up to this last paragraph, tended to move away from the strongly personal and emotional tone of its opening; the problem has been strenuously forced into an intellectual pattern, and although the straining undercurrent of feeling has at times pushed through, the general movement has been towards a distancing, and a reining in of emotion, until in the *coda* Browning has, to use his own "House" and "Shop" analogy, closed the door to his living-quarters. Now, in the *envoi*, he returns to the immediate experience from which the poem

started, but with his instinct for concealment active, as the obliqueness of the lines shows. Why were the thoughts less loosely linked as he descended Mt. Salève than now, six weeks later, as he writes the poem? When he says that then he found the chain flawless till it reached Miss Smith's grave, does he mean that it was flawless to that point but not beyond? that the chain broke at the grave? or that the chain firmly joined himself and the grave? Why does he speak of the chain "I *seemed* to forge there"? Does "Not so filmy was the texture, but I bore it safe thus far" mean, following "not so loose," that the texture then was firmer? or merely that the chain was strong enough to bear away? What are the tangles that needed unravelling? If the chain was less loosely linked and not so filmy then, why was it tangled? And finally, what is the significance of the root symbol which replaces that of the chain?

It is easier to ask these questions than to answer them, although I have no doubt other readers of the poem more perceptive than I have found less difficulty here. My own consideration of these lines, in relation to the rest of the poem, suggests an analogy which I offer with all due diffidence. The analogy is with Bishop Blougram. It is well known that the Bishop shares some of his author's qualities, and I would suggest that one of them is a reluctance to reveal the inner springs of his being. In his argument with Gigadibs, he proceeds from the journalist's premisses, and weaves a chain of argument strong enough for his purpose and valid enough as far as it goes, but based very little upon the genuine depths of his convictions. At the end of the argument, he reviews it:

> "On the whole," he thought, "I justify myself
> On every point where cavillers like this
> Oppugn my life: he tries one kind of fence,
> I close, he's worsted, that's enough for him.
> He's on the ground: if ground should break away
> I take my stand on, there's a firmer yet
> Beneath it, both of us may sink and reach."

In part, his procedure is a matter of tactics, but also in part a result of reticence (genuine and deeper feeling emerges from time to time), a reluctance to "unlock his heart," particularly to Gigadibs.

In *La Saisiaz*, as Professor De Vane has pointed out, Browning argues from the premisses of the contributors to the Modern Symposium, or perhaps more strictly, from premisses acceptable to Frederic

Harrison. As Professor De Vane puts it, "*La Saisiaz* may be said to be Browning's contribution to this debate" (*A Browning Handbook*, 2nd ed., 1955, 422). But since the poem was not actually contributed to the Symposium, there is really no necessity for Browning to confine himself to these terms, particularly since he represents himself in the poem as seeking from himself the fullest, most honest and most urgent answer to the question:

> Much less have I heart to palter when the matter to decide
> Now becomes "Was ending ending once and always, when you died?"

It is hard to believe that tactical considerations, or terms of debate, had a major influence on his procedure. It is, I think, much more understandable that Blougram's other motive, reticence, is operating here in Browning. Many other poems, including the Blougram, suggest much deeper grounds for the poet's faith than the "chain" which occupies the main part of *La Saisiaz*. I would suggest that his real thoughts on Mt. Salève included many of these deeper elements; the chain was not the loose and simple chain the poem presents, with its successive links of postulates conceded; but was stronger, more tangled, and included very different sorts of links, particularly where it reached the grave. Some hints appear in the poem of these other links: the quotation from Dante (lines 217ff.) momentarily draws aside a curtain; so does the passage (lines 531ff.),

> When, half a week
> Since, we walked and talked and thus I told you, how suffused a cheek
> You had turned me had I sudden brought the blush into the smile
> By some word like "Idly argued! you know better all the while!"

Blougram, as he fenced with Gigadibs, knew better all the while; Browning and Miss Smith, as they discussed the "fence-play" of the Symposium, also had deeper grounds of faith. But Browning's deeper grounds are bound up with his own personal tragedies—not only with the loss of his friend, but with that of his wife. To resurrect the buried roots of his faith "could not be without earthquake." The "last pregnant hour," which he has re-lived in the poem, is now re-interred; the love and sorrow which it recalls, along with the living hope, will become a fruitful part of the poet's inner life. What he reveals in the poem, a true part of his thought, a true part of his emotion, gives some suggestion of the real depths; the most eloquent witness of the depth of his love and faith comes in the last line: "Least part this: then what the whole?"

The Two Moralities of Spinoza

Robert McRae

The philosophers of the ancient world believed that philosophical knowledge was essential to the attainment of the good life. Rarely has this value been placed upon it in the modern world. No one denied the ancient claim for philosophy more emphatically than Kant himself. "We do not," he said, "need science and philosophy to know what we should do to be honest and good, yea, even wise and virtuous." It is significant that in the search for his supreme principle of morality Kant had proceeded by an analysis of the moral judgments of ordinary men. It was then possible for him to say that in giving the principle an explicit formulation he was not teaching men anything new, but was only directing their attention to a principle that they themselves always employed in their moral decisions. Thus the knowledge necessary for the attainment of wisdom and virtue is not philosophical but vulgar knowledge, possessed by the simplest and least educated of men. It is significant also that Kant's conclusion that this is so is something he supposed would already be taken for granted by his readers. "Indeed," he says, "we might well have conjectured beforehand that the knowledge of what every man is bound to do, and therefore also to know, would be within the reach of every man, even the commonest." To emphasize this point Kant went even further. He argued that the common man not only has as good a hope as any philosopher of making a correct moral decision but is more likely to do so. The philosopher is at the disadvantage of being able to use his philosophical skills to argue on the side of his desires and inclinations against the strict laws of duty, to question their validity, and to corrupt them.

Christianity had much to do with the destruction of the ancient claims on behalf of philosophy. It is taught in the New Testament that to enter the kingdom of heaven it is necessary to become a little child. The chances of the foolish to confound the wise have not always, per-

haps, been estimated at the same rate by Christians—St. Gregory Nazianzen protested that the kingdom of heaven was not necessarily confined to fools—but the Church has always taught that the knowledge necessary to salvation is within the grasp of the simplest intelligence.

On the secular side the development of theories of natural law also weighed heavily against the classical ideal. When "law" in the sense of "command" or "ordinance" is taken as the basic ethical concept, as is the case in natural law theories, then it will follow that the knowledge required for the attainment of virtue is common knowledge. If a law is to oblige it must be known. This will be as true for moral laws as for civil laws. And since virtue will consist solely in an attitude of obedience towards laws which are evident in the light of every man's reason, the highest virtue is available equally and without distinction to the philosophical and to the multitude, and philosophy is useless in instructing men how to attain it.

There were, however, two philosophers of the seventeenth century who were pre-eminent in maintaining that moral knowledge is philosophical knowledge and who thereby denied to the multitude the hope of acquiring it. For Descartes the science of morals, "the last degree of wisdom," rests on the foundations of metaphysics and physics. This moral knowledge he confessed he had not himself reached. He had to be content with a merely provisional code. But if it had been found it could never have become popular knowledge, for the metaphysics on which it was to rest was confined by Descartes to the very few whom he considered capable of metaphysical thinking. Descartes was, however, a good Christian. He could not ignore the doctrine that the knowledge necessary for salvation lies within the reach of every man. He therefore made a sharp distinction between what must be known for salvation in the next world and what must be known for the good life in this world. The first is available to all through Revelation; the second can be acquired only through philosophy.

But Descartes' high hopes for the possibility of a philosophical morality are pale beside the passionate conviction of Spinoza that only through philosophy could he attain blessedness. Spinoza's ethics *is* metaphysics. Through the mere possession of metaphysical knowledge man attains his perfection or salvation. But the road to such knowledge is steep and few have found it. "And clearly," Spinoza says, "it must be very hard when it is so seldom found. For how could it be that it is neglected practically by all, if salvation were close at hand and could

be found without difficulty? But excellent things are as difficult as they are rare." Then what fate awaits the non-philosophical? Spinoza, no less than Descartes, had to take account of the tradition which maintains that whatever is required for salvation can be easily understood by the multitude. He too asserted that this knowledge is provided through Revelation. Unlike Descartes, however, he did not make a distinction between the knowledge necessary for the next life and that necessary for this. On the contrary, Spinoza maintains that philosophy and Scripture both teach a way to the same end, salvation; one is for the few, the other is for the many. Unless we had the testimony of Scripture, says Spinoza, we should doubt of the salvation of nearly all men.

Though both Revelation and philosophy show a way to salvation they are utterly distinct and independent of one another. Neither can serve as handmaid to the other. The Scriptures are historical narratives and as such require interpretation. To understand them means to understand the intentions of their authors. When the correct rules for interpreting historical writings are used it is found that the authors of Scripture intended to teach no speculative doctrines whatever, but only precepts for the governing of conduct. Revelation has obedience for its sole object, not truth. Its dogmas assert nothing about what is in the nature of things, they command. Faith in a Scriptural doctrine is not the contemplation of a truth, but the actual conduct itself demanded by the doctrine. "Faith does not demand that dogmas be true as that they should be pious—that is, such as will stir up the heart to obey." The meaning of such seemingly speculative doctrines in theology as "God is One" or "God is Omnipotent" lies entirely in the emotional attitudes and consequent conduct which these doctrines generate.

The word "law" has, says Spinoza, two distinct meanings. It can be used to designate either natural necessity or a human decree. Law in the first sense is the necessity which applies to whatever follows from the nature or the definition of a thing. It is, for example, the necessity with which the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Such a law is in no respect a command or a precept. It is an "eternal truth," and it is discovered by reason. The vulgar, however, have no conception of such law. They understand law only in the sense of "command," a device of legislators for keeping the masses in check through the threat of punishment, "like a horse with a curb."

To think of God's laws as commands, rather than as eternal truths,

is to be guilty of crude anthropomorphism. One may legitimately refer to God's commands only when speaking to the vulgar and ignorant, and indeed it is absolutely essential to do so if the masses are to be controlled. Moses was not a philosopher. He did not perceive the revelations of God as truths, but as precepts and ordinances. Accordingly he thought of God in purely human terms, as a ruler, a legislator, a king, and as merciful and just, and he spoke of him as such, although these terms are completely inapplicable to the nature of God. Christ is credited by Spinoza with possessing philosophical knowledge. Unlike Moses he perceived the revelations of God as eternal truths. He did not, however, utter them in that form, but as commands, in order to accommodate himself to the comprehension of an ignorant and obstinate people.

It appears from this that there is for Spinoza only one kind of morality, but that it can be revealed in two ways, either in the form of eternal truths to the philosophical, or in the form of commands to the multitude. What Christ knew in the form of truths he put into the forms of vulgar discourse. "I recognize no difference," Spinoza says, "between the cases where God teaches and commands the practice of justice and charity through our natural faculties, and those where he makes special revelations; nor is the form of revelation of importance so long as such practice is revealed and becomes a sovereign and supreme law to men."

It is impossible, however, to leave Spinoza's account of the difference between philosophical morality and the Scriptural morality for the vulgar at this point. The issue is complicated by a deliberate contradiction. The assurance that Revelation and philosophy are two parallel and equally valid ways to salvation is, indeed, very cautiously, but perfectly explicitly denied. There is only one way to salvation—through the love of God. This love arises from the knowledge of Him, and in no other way. But it is only through reason that we can know. Scripture provides no knowledge of God's nature. The right interpretation of Scripture shows that there are no statements in it whose import is to reveal this nature. Scripture reveals only laws, commands, or imperatives, and any statements about God have merely emotive significance. They are designed to make men act in certain ways. Therefore Scripture does not provide what is necessary for salvation. Chapter IV of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is designed to leave no doubt on this point in the mind of the careful reader.

And yet we are to believe, says Spinoza, that Revelation shows the

way to salvation. On what grounds are we to believe this? Not on rational grounds certainly, for that would mean that theology is subordinate to philosophy. It is solely on its own authority that we can say that Scripture teaches true moral doctrines. "We cannot perceive by the natural light of reason that simple obedience is the path of salvation, and are taught by Revelation only that it is so by the special grace of God, which our reason cannot attain." Then what does it mean to *believe* that Scripture teaches the way to salvation? Belief, or faith, is not an opinion concerning the truth of Scriptural doctrines. Belief is conformity of our actions to such doctrines, doctrines which, as we have seen, are all commands or ordinances. To believe means simply to obey. It is therefore in the conformity of Spinoza's actions to what is commanded, and in nothing else, that he may be said to believe that obedience is the path to salvation. He is not committed to any opinion that this is true. No man, says Spinoza, can be commanded, nor can he compel himself, to believe anything to be true contrary to his natural judgment. And if we examine Spinoza's philosophical morality, we see that he cannot possibly regard it as true, for his philosophical morality is directly contrary to the Scriptural morality in its most fundamental aspect.

Scriptural morality is the morality of obedience to law, but philosophical morality consists in complete autonomy and freedom from all obligations. Hence the meaning of virtue is quite different in the two. For the philosopher virtue is a wholly metaphysical concept. Degrees of virtue are degrees of perfection or reality or power. A man passes from a lower to a higher degree of perfection or reality in so far as he becomes the cause of his own actions, and ceases to have them determined for him by anything external. Virtue therefore is inconsistent with submission to a law and is never the performance of duties in accordance with imperatives. In this philosophical morality of complete emancipation from any obligations the terms good and bad, praise and blame, sin and merit, have no application. In the Scriptural morality virtue consists in obedience and it is here alone that we can correctly speak of sin and merit, and bestow praise and blame. Spinoza recognized, however, that we do not attribute virtue to the man who is obedient to the law for the sake of rewards or the avoidance of punishments. "In truth, a man who renders everyone their due because he fears the gallows, acts under the sway and compulsion of others, and cannot be called just . . . for justice, as commonly defined, is the constant and perpetual will to render every man his due." Obedience to the law is

only moral in so far as it arises from "a constant determination of the heart" or is performed voluntarily. It is just this voluntary obedience which it is the special function of religion to produce by arousing in men the feelings of devotion or reverence. Both Testaments, Spinoza says, are nothing but schools for the teaching of obedience "and have neither of them any aim beyond *inspiring mankind with a voluntary obedience*."

The anti-Christian character of Spinoza's *Ethics* has often been remarked. There is his statement: "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life." There is his condemnation of asceticism and the mortification of the body. Hope, like fear, is treated as a mark of weakness; the wise man is without hope. He is without compassion. "Humility is not a virtue." "Repentance is not a virtue." On the contrary, self-satisfaction is the greatest good we can enjoy. Hope and fear, humility and repentance, are useful only for keeping the masses in check. "The multitude becomes a thing to be feared if it has nothing to fear. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the prophets, thinking rather of the good of the community than of the few, should have commended so greatly humility, repentance, and reverence." These virtues are the virtues of a morality based on obedience to law. They are virtues in the irrational multitude, but not in a free man.

At the same time we cannot ignore the strong approbation given to Christian morality in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. There Spinoza takes charity to be the sum of Christian virtue, and it is in the love of one's fellows that he sees the coincidence of what is taught by Christ and by the philosopher. For Spinoza's judgment upon the Scriptural morality we must turn to his politics.

The *Tractatus Politicus* contains in its fifth chapter a description of the ideal republic, a republic more ideal even than Plato's. It is a commonwealth whose citizens live in complete unity with one another, because each is wholly governed by reason. It is in effect a perfect democracy of autonomous philosophers. Plato had gone no further than to require his kings to be philosophers. The appearance of the ideal commonwealth in this treatise is at first astonishing, for the very opening sentences contemptuously dismiss this classic approach to political philosophy. The Utopianism in which theory is so at variance with practice has brought philosophers into general disrepute, with the result that "no men are esteemed less fit to direct public affairs than theorists or philosophers." Anyone who supposes "that the multitude . . . can

ever be induced to live under the bare dictate of reason, must be dreaming of the poetic golden age, or of a stage-play." Politics must take men as they are, not as we should like them to be.

It is as a realist, taking men as they are, irrational and in bondage to their passions, that Spinoza describes the origin of the state. Conceived in terms of its origin the state is a coercive power, restraining men's conflicting passions "not by reason, which cannot check emotions, but by threats." But men enter into political society in order to acquire security from one another, and thus to gain freedom and increased power of action. To the extent to which a man finds himself among other individuals who agree with him, to that extent is his power of acting aided and fostered. Hence the greater the unity in the state, the greater the power of each individual in it, and at the same time the greater the power of the state. If men are subject to their passions they will be in conflict with one another, and a unified mode of life can only be imposed upon them from without. But when men are guided by reason they will necessarily agree with one another, and the power of the state will then cease to be coercive. It becomes more powerful as it becomes less coercive, and in the ideal state, a perfect democracy, no actions would be compelled, but all would be freely performed. Obedience would disappear. The state as merely coercive power is the weakest state, and no one can long retain a tyrant's sway. "Of a commonwealth, whose subjects are but hindered by terror from taking arms, it should rather be said, that it is free from war, than that it has peace." A people who are held together by force do not yet form a true state. They form a true state when, acting under reason, they are completely unified. Thus Spinoza, the despiser of Utopias, is unable to conceive the nature of the state except under its ideal form.

We are now in a position to understand the role assigned by Spinoza to the Scriptural or vulgar morality. It provides the necessary transition between the initial form of the state conceived as coercive power to its final and ideal form as a commonwealth of free citizens in perfect unity with one another, not acting from obedience but autonomously under reason. The steps in this transition can be traced within the history of the Hebrew religion and its continued development in the Christian religion. Through the educative influence of the Scriptural morality the means of salvation have been opened to the multitude, though that salvation itself can only be achieved in the life of philosophy. Acting through the imagination and feelings of the irrational multitude, this morality prepares the way for the unity of man with man which is

essential to the attainment of the good life of the philosopher. The history of Scriptural morality is the history of a moral progression towards a goal not yet reached, in which this morality would be transcended by a philosophical morality.

The Scriptural morality of the love of one's neighbour was in its beginnings developed under the rigid coercion of the Mosaic ceremonial law. The strict discipline in which the Hebrews were raised, which compelled them to carry out all their actions according to set rules in even the most trivial matters, engendered such a habit in them, "that conformity seemed freedom instead of servitude, and men desired what was commanded rather than what was forbidden." Voluntary obedience gradually took the place of coerced obedience, and the people were united in a fervent patriotism, in which charity and love towards fellow-citizens were accounted the highest piety. It was, however, a charity which drew its strength from the extreme hatred with which all other peoples were regarded. Indeed the Mosaic religion was deliberately contrived to produce hatred and to have this hatred reciprocated, in order to effect the unity of the people. "Thus the love of the Hebrews for their country was not only patriotism, but also piety, and was cherished and nurtured by daily rites till, like their hatred of other nations, it must have passed into their nature. Their daily worship was not only different from that of other nations . . ., it was absolutely contrary. Such daily reprobation naturally gave rise to a lasting hatred, deeply implanted in the heart: for of all hatreds none is more deep and tenacious than that which springs from extreme devoutness or piety, and is itself cherished as pious. Nor was a general cause lacking for inflaming such hatred more and more, inasmuch as it was reciprocated; the surrounding nations regarding the Jews with a hatred just as intense."

Thus we see in the Hebrew religion an advance from coerced obedience to voluntary obedience, but we see also how the ties of love and charity, as the result of which men voluntarily do their duties to one another, are awakened through a deliberately fostered hatred. With the destruction of the Hebrew nation the law of God was no longer adapted to the forming of a particular state and the disposition of a particular people, and hatred of others lost its significance for the inculcating of charity. Christ therefore taught that love should be extended to all men without exception. With freedom from the ceremonial law by which the Hebrew unity was moulded, the ties of coercion were further lessened. Christ was sent to all nations "to free all men equally from bondage to the law, that they should no more do right by the command

of the law, but by the constant determination of their hearts." The step from Mosaic charity based on hatred of the enemy to Christian charity towards all men is a step towards philosophical morality, for "hatred can never be good" and "the wise man will seek to repay hatred with love."

Scriptural morality then prepares the mind for philosophical morality. It does this by fostering as virtues, humility, reverence, repentance, and compassion for the suffering of others. "Those who are liable to these emotions can be led far easier than others to live under the guidance of reason." Should, however, a man be successfully brought to live under reason, he will then cease to be governed by these feelings. He will be without compassion. But "he who is moved neither by reason nor pity to help others is rightly called inhuman, for he seems to be dissimilar to a man."

Did Spinoza believe in the possibility of universal enlightenment? And did he believe that by means of the Scriptural morality men had been actually brought closer to it, by having their minds so prepared that they could be led to live the life of reason? Spinoza has mocked as foolish dreamers those who believe that the multitude can ever be induced to live under the bare dictate of reason. And in the same place he has been equally contemptuous of those who think that religion can influence men to live in unity with one another. "All are persuaded that religion teaches every man to love his neighbour as himself, that is to defend another's right just as much as his own, yet we showed that this persuasion has too little power over the passions. It avails, indeed, in the hour of death, when disease has subdued the very passions, and man lies inert, or in temples, where men hold no traffic, but least of all, where it is more needed, in the law-court or the palace."

But Spinoza's philosophy committed him absolutely to doing everything in his power to realize what he has condemned as a stage-play vision of an age of reason. His own greatest perfection, which consists in a union of the mind with the whole of nature or God, is possible only when others share this perfection too, and he must ceaselessly strive that they acquire it with him. "It is part of my happiness that many others should understand as I do, and that their understanding and desire should be entirely in harmony with my understanding and desire; and in order to bring this to pass it is necessary . . . to form such a society as is essential for the purpose of enabling most people to acquire this nature with the greatest ease and security."

Part of the task of effecting this transformation lies within religion.

Whatever impotence Spinoza may have attributed to it in the control of men's passions, his treatment of the Mosaic religion indicates that, quite to the contrary, he considered it a most powerful agent. Moreover he believed that "the supreme and essential mystery" of despotic statecraft lies in the employment of religion to hoodwink subjects—"to mask the fear, which keeps them down, with the specious garb of religion, so that men may fight as bravely for slavery as for safety, and count it not shame but highest honour to risk their blood and their lives for the vainglory of a tyrant; yet in a free state no more mischievous expedient could be employed or attempted." False religion is the principal instrument for the destruction of the freedom essential to the life of reason. It is of the utmost urgency that true religion be distinguished from false religion and superstition. True religion consists only in the practice of justice and charity. This can be known by all to be so if the right rule of interpreting the Scriptures is employed in the reading of them. No supernatural light nor any external authority is required for their interpretation, nor any special philosophical skill. Any man is capable of determining the meaning of the Scriptures, for Spinoza's method of interpretation has, he believes, been adapted to "the natural and ordinary faculties and capacity of mankind." It is then here, in the sphere of Scriptural interpretation, that he would begin his education of the public. When its members see for themselves the import of Scriptural doctrine, and that religion requires nothing but justice and charity, the mind will not only be left free for philosophical speculation, but it will also be in that condition which makes it possible then to lead men from the life of religion into the life of reason.

Garrison State or Concentration Camp?

Eugen Weber

Ages and societies have distinctive marks: the greatness of Egypt is remembered in the pyramids, the aspirations of the Middle Ages soar on in their great cathedrals. Such symbols tell the story of a society, they contain and reflect in a simplified form its aspirations and its implications. By this token, our society seems likely to be remembered by its concentration camps. Really and symbolically, they are the distinctive mark of our new political culture.

In a paper which he published in the *American Journal of Sociology* of January 1941,[1] Professor Harold Lasswell set out "to consider the possibility that we are moving toward a world of 'garrison states' . . . in which the specialists on violence are the most powerful group in society." The paper was so aptly timed that its argument may have been taken as merely one more variation on a commonplace theme. Fifteen years later we see it was more, much more, than that.

The move towards a garrison state, suggests Dr. Lasswell, would imply a trend "away from the dominance of the business man, and toward the supremacy of the soldier." Of this development, he goes on to say, there are "transitional forms, such as the party propaganda state where the dominant figure is the propagandist, and the party bureaucratic state in which the organization men of the party make the vital decisions." Thus, he gives us a glimpse of stages in a process of development, transitional stages during which propagandist or bureaucrat may rule, before the end-product is attained in which the soldier reigns supreme.

Yet, this idea does not seem to be borne out by recent trends. Though we seem indeed to be proceeding everywhere towards the final supremacy of the specialists on violence, the soldier does not seem an appropriate incarnation of these specialists, nor the garrison state quite the right symbol for their régime. Soldier dictators are nothing new, and there is little enough difference between enlightened despotism and

Dr. Lasswell's garrison state, except the greater technical facilities at the disposal of the latter. Presumably, we are looking for something more—for a military oligarchy running the state for ends that are mainly military. Yet, recent studies of the German army have shown its failure to dominate the politics of Germany, and bear out Gaetano Mosca's contention that "an omnipotent standing army makes one of the worst forms of government." More to the point, soldiers only ask to be properly treated and reasonably employed.[2] They are not rulers, but technicians in the service of the ruler—the army is a tool and a weapon in his hand. The garrison state where *soldiers* rule, is no more of a reality than the police state where policemen rule. Once in power, the soldier does not rule as a "soldier" but simply as a power-politician.

In the same way, and to an even greater extent, propagandists are not rulers, but the tools of rulers. Important as they are, indispensable as a profession in the circumstances of today, they are not particularly united or group-conscious in the desire to capture power. Recent studies of propaganda as a political force show the propagandist as the technician he is, not as a politician. Another group of men who were once thought to exercise significant control in the political sphere were the members of the Diplomatic Corps. John Bright could call the service the "outdoor relief department" of the aristocracy. But, as late as the beginning of this century, men like Delcassé, Kiderlen-Wächter, and the Cambon brothers, could still frame and initiate policies that affected the destiny of their countries without even the knowledge of the legislative power; and sometimes even without the knowledge of the Cabinet.

Such freedom of initiative, such power, no longer exist. The recent work of an American historian on *The Wilhelmstrasse* has dispelled, I think, all remaining doubts that they have gone for good (or ill). Mr. Paul Seabury has analysed the reaction of the German foreign service to the Nazi régime, in order to view through it the behaviour and the chances of the bureaucrat in the modern party state. It soon appears that in a struggle between the bureaucrat or manager and the charismatic Leader or the party-gang, the latter will win. The levers of power do not stand by the bureaucrat's desk, but in the Brown House (to a lesser extent, more figuratively speaking, also in the White House); and they are as likely to generate dynamic chaos as managerial order.

So, in terms of power-possibilities, out go the soldiers, the diplomats, the bureaucrats—even Mr. Burnham's ambitious technocrats. Out, in fact, goes the expert, the specialist, the technician. Influential though he may be, he must keep to his place as a tool, an adviser, a subordinate: he is not the manipulator of the levers of power. And whom have

we left at these levers, after so much elimination? The leader, or the leading clique; and the knowledge that their background, their provenance, are immaterial. Soldiers, lawyers, or demagogues—they owe allegiance only to themselves. The important thing is that they rule; and that they do not rule to advance any interests, ultimately, but their own.

Though we cannot know their personality, and therefore predict their actions, we know one fact about the men who exercise power which gives us an insight into their likely principles of behaviour. We know the lowest common denominator or highest common factor of all rulers to be that power which is their end, and the reason of their being. We know that in the achievement, the conservation, and the increase of power lies the essence of their work. Their aspirations to a power ever more secure, ever more absolute, mitigated only by their own will or irresolution, have turned everything to account. Religion, reform, national or class aspirations, are all pressed into service. The rulers themselves sometimes express the spirit of the age, at other times they accept the terms which that spirit imposed upon them. Sincerity, self-awareness, or shrewd hypocrisy, are all equally irrelevant in terms of their persistent quest.

Democracy has never hampered them: it merely calls for adjustment. The adjustment once made, the new form is found to serve the purposes of power sometimes even better than the old. As Roberto Michels explained a long time ago, the very fact that he is chosen by a democratic procedure provides the elected leader with better reason to consider himself the reflection of the collective will, hence to expect obedience to his personal will. He expects collective submission to the collective will which he is supposed to represent. Once upon a time it was a sin against the will of God to disobey the king. In a modern democracy, disobedience of the elected leader is a sin against oneself, and against that greater self which is one's will and that of others put "freely" into the leader's keeping.[3]

A series of great studies[4] has shown that the organization of modern political parties, even those bearing the most democratic labels, is far from democratic. And we know now that political parties are in effect oligarchic organizations, whose leadership falls to the most skilful and successful power-politician, and whose growing power tends to monopolize the political struggle in the society itself.

When, before the First World War, Michels was making his great study of "democratic" political parties, he could still point to the electorate itself as offering a counterweight to the monolithic party machin-

ery then in the making. He could suggest that the "elected" parliamentary politician is more independent than the "party" politician. The former, thought Michels, solicits an unorganized mass, easier to sway, more comfortable to handle, than the party organization with its dogma and its long memory. But now the elected politician and the party politician are one, and both labour under the same discipline and under the same restraints. The British election of 1945 "was not a candidates' election. . . . Electors voted not so much for the man as for the side." Five years later, "the 1950 election campaign . . . manifested, to a degree greater than ever before, the concentration of power in the hands of the central offices. . . ." So much so, that "the total absence of Independents made the Parliament of 1950 unique in its generation."[5] The election and the Parliament of 1955 merely confirm (and, in the fate of Sir Richard Acland, emphasize) this point. In France, too, the new *apparentement*, or conjugation of electoral lists, has made it at least theoretically impossible for the independent candidate to secure election. In practice, of course, the would-be independent adopts a convenient label and tries to make a deal—not with the electorate, but with his fellow-politicians. As in the United States or Canada, the significant political decisions are not made at the polls, but beforehand in party caucus, in hotel bedrooms, in private or semi-private arrangements which the elector has only to ratify.[6]

There are, of course, other organizations, other institutions, in a position to exert some influence on public opinion—schools, churches, trade unions. Wherever political power nears its ideal and political control is perfected, institutions such as these are supervised by the government. Wise statesmen have long considered education a branch of the civil service. In Soviet countries the church is muzzled, and the trade unions are a department of state. But even in the democracies such institutions have lost their power to rival the state, or to compete with it even merely for the public ear. I know no better recent discussion of this development than that of Bertrand de Jouvenel, in *Du pouvoir*.

Another important work, J. Goldstein's study of *The Government of British Trade Unions*, tells us how the unions, though neither muzzled nor nationalized, reproduce the democratic humbug and oligarchic conditions of political parties. The interesting thing to note about these circumstances is that nobody seems to mind, or even care. There is awareness up to a certain point, but no resentment. "Almost all inactive [union members] and . . . even one third of the active members felt that they have never had any influence in a union decision or matter of policy," reports Mr. Goldstein. Of 111 people he questioned, 94

answered in this vein. And yet, "there is no feeling of frustration prevalent among the . . . rank and file. . . . A certain stability is thereby achieved at the expense of democratic control, for members not well informed of the meaning of membership do not feel deprived of the opportunity to take part."[7]

Such apathy is nothing new.[8] But Mr. Goldstein provides a well-documented reminder that the apathy is still with us, in an insidious, pervasive, and politically significant form. And this perhaps will help us discover what symbol would most appropriately replace Dr. Lasswell's garrison state.

II

There is a well-known and pertinent story about a man who saws away the branch of the tree on which he sits. The story is so absurd that it is considered funny; but men in our time live a more absurd story still—a story in which millions are busily building walls about themselves, prison walls, barrack walls, concentration camp walls, all to imprison themselves in. Is the image so extreme when we know that thousands have dug their own graves, climbed down into them, and waited to be shot? What is extraordinary about people building their own concentration camps, when we know they are so docile about digging their own graves? What is extraordinary about *1984*, when we know that half the world is living it in 1955?

The concentration camp is an isolation camp, systematically organized, cut off from the world, living its own life by its own rules. These rules are arbitrary and indeterminate, based on the camp's peculiar norms and, ultimately, on the will of its rulers. No outside standards are necessarily valid; if they appear, it is only by accidental and peculiar sanction. Since the will of the rulers may change as casually as may the rulers themselves, the canon of the camp resolves itself into power to inflict on one side, and will to survive on the other. Events appear uncontrollable, illogical, indeterminate. The arbitrary reigns: there is no rule of law, but rather of casual chance and of fancy which may determine life or death. Concentration camp economics appear opportunely as the epitome of that consumption economy which David Riesman tells us is the characteristic of contemporary society. They go to the very heart of things, by setting out to consume, not products, but the very essence of the products—time; and ultimately even human beings.

In the great concentration camp community, differences of degree, differences of intensity, only too often become blurred. Not all concentration camps are the same; none are perfect of their kind. But they resemble each other, their rulers resemble each other, their inmates

resemble each other. For the rulers power, for the others survival, is the ultimately significant thing. And, where survival is the only end, to be alive in 1984 seems preferable to extinction in 1955. Surrender seems preferable to annihilation.

Surrender does not necessarily begin with ourselves. Most often it is others whom we consent to surrender in order to save ourselves, in order to buy time; and we go from surrender to surrender until everything and everyone we are allowed to sacrifice is gone, but our naked selves. The Jewish police force in the Warsaw Ghetto, the Death House cleaning squads at Auschwitz, carried this survivalism to its logical conclusion, without in the end managing to survive. If only we could save ourselves at the price of others! Harold Laski knew this: "An acceptance of injustice to others is the price we pay, and are prepared to pay, for our own safety."[9] We accept the injustice "because it is none of our business," and John Donne is proved wrong by the practice of mankind, though he may be right in the poetic sense which Goethe tells us is the only form of truth. We accept the injustice because our neighbours do likewise, because it is at least tacitly endorsed by a public opinion which is a mass of jellified private opinions moved by discreditable emotions.

The brotherhood of man is a brotherhood of fear, a fraternity of conformity enforced by habit and by force. "La fraternité n'est que l'impossibilité de tuer son frère." So, on the one hand we have a surrender based on fear; on the other, the apathy, the indolence, the adjustability of man in the mass. Man's docility, his readiness to come to terms with a new reality which henceforth will be his norm, is an important characteristic. Some animals sicken and die outside their natural habitat. By that token, it is hard to assign a natural habitat to man: he lives as normally in the concentration camp as in the city. Only the norms are different.

Russian prisoners in Finland, sent to work almost freely in Finnish factories, complained of their humiliating lack of freedom. At home, they said, they owned and ran the factories in which they worked. Here they were serfs, their human dignity injured. Such a situation is the making of different norms, created by different conditions, and concealing different realities behind a similar vocabulary. As Bergson suggested, the word can be more powerful even than our own experience, apt to interpret or misinterpret it for us. It colours it, or covers it, or finally convinces us that the experience is not what it is but what it should have been. Bergson had foreseen the techniques of *1984*, though not their application.[10]

But it seems uncertain whether such elaborate techniques as Orwell outlines are even necessary. Before *1984* had seen the day, or the public read *Darkness at Noon*, before events had presented Arthur Koestler with his Gletkins and his Rubashovs, the Marquis de Custine travelling in Russia noted matter of factly *les martyrs en adoration devant leurs bourreaux*—the victims who worshipped their tormentors. Admittedly, he thought this could only happen in Russia, but perhaps that was so because the appropriate climate of opinion existed only in Russia. Given the right climate of opinion it could be true elsewhere, and there is little after all to choose between the apparent motivations of the early Christian martyrs and those of the ilk of Rubashov. Like him, Orwell's tortured hero stands in adoration before his torturer, and eventually tears of joy run down his cheeks because at last he loves Big Brother. No poem of Francis Thompson could improve the saga of chase and surrender. No Russian martyr could do better than that. What makes it possible? Let Custine tell us: "C'est la discipline du camp instituée à l'ordre de la cité; c'est l'état de siège devenu l'état normal de la société."[11]

There, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a French soldier gives us the pattern of the concentration camp state, the recipe for attaining the obvious end of all political striving: power, and power as absolute as possible. Is it a military camp or a concentration camp? The question is irrelevant. Jodl described Rastenburg, Hitler's East Prussian headquarters, as "a cross between a monastery and a concentration camp."[12] In a state of siege (and the world is in one now), any camp is a prison, any ruler (though absolute) is prisoner in his own camp. In order to create the exact conditions he wants, he will use propaganda. In order to enforce them, he will use the military or police. In order to remain undisputed, he will stifle discussion at home and, where he cannot crush contradiction abroad, he will isolate the country from contaminating influences. What can be more isolated than a concentration camp, more a world in itself, more easily shaped to the norms most convenient to its rulers?

But, though this may be possible in the imagination of Orwell, or in the peculiar circumstances of the Soviet Empire, it cannot happen, surely, where democratic institutions prevail? Slender hope! We have seen that democratic institutions are, in fact, oligarchic. The machinery of democratic politics is the machinery of oligarchic power. Organization, indispensable if some order is to prevail, means the syphoning of power into narrow, disciplined channels. "Qui dit organization, dit oligarchie."[13] From oligarchy to dictatorship is but a step. Indeed, the

oligarch may well be a despot—even a dictator. Long ago Jefferson pointed out in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, that "173 despots would surely be as oppressive as one," and described the concentration of power which he saw taking place as an elective despotism. He may have exaggerated, but he foresaw the possibilities of the situation only too clearly. Within his own lifetime he was to see them realized in Bonaparte, whom Laboulaye has described as "democracy personified, the nation incarnated in a man."

There is no necessary contradiction between election and despotism, between democracy and autocracy. The Second Empire in France provides a case in point of such an apparent contradiction in terms; so does the Second German Reich—and even the Third, though this is more debatable. But the difference, the apparent contradiction, is a matter of words, of opportunities, and of impressions. The label of a leader or régime serves the same purpose of reassurance as the inscription *Shower-Bath* over the door of the Dachau death-chamber; but it means little. Just how little it means may be gleaned from Mr. Goldstein's account of how the dominant group of a branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Communist in 1947, had become Labour by 1948, not through a change of membership or heart but by the personal metamorphosis of Communist party members into Labour party members.[14]

> It is interesting to note that this change was not a result of pressure from the rank and file members. It was a result rather of pressure from the top. . . . As it became increasingly evident that it was fashionable to be anti-Communistic in order to remain in the good graces of those on top, Branch leadership, eager to hold on to its power and to continue to climb the hierarchical ladder of Union authority, began to see the light. But substantially, the members of the same clique are in power. . . .

Are these Communists masquerading under an opportunistic label, or opportunists operating now under the Communist, now under the Labour label? Impossible to tell. Certainly, though, the label is irrelevant; only the will to power is relevant.

Issues can be as factitious as labels. This truth appears in *Animal Farm* and, more bitterly, in *1984*. But even Orwell could not improve on the tragi-comedy of recent (and less recent) Communist politics, in which the loser becomes the scapegoat for his failures or another's. Neither issues nor labels, neither the success nor the failure of policies, really matter in this new universe where the only reality is power, and the preservation of power. To this end, a determined effort to suppress individuality supplements the natural apathy or indifference of the

masses. To this end, disciplined other-directedness becomes the highest virtue, and conditions can be created almost at will to suit the needs of the moment. War scares, production drives, sympathy, or hatred, can be manipulated as necessary. And the essence of this activity is a continuous diminution of individuality, leading to a happy slave-mindedness. Ideally, the sheep which bleat "Four legs good, two legs bad" one day, must switch without a hitch in thought (in fact, without a thought) to "Four legs good, two legs better," whenever so required. And, maybe, back again.

There seems to be some evidence that we are moving towards such a halcyon state, that the concentration camp state is already here, forcing the appearance of a concentration camp world. The barbed wire faces both ways, and it is sometimes hard to tell who is fenced in, and who is fenced out.

Napoleon once said that you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. We are engaged in proving him wrong to save our lives. We are learning to sit on bayonets—an uncomfortable situation known as cold war. Yet the cold war could be more accurately described as perpetual war; or perpetual crisis and partial war, such as that which the Roman and the Parthian Empires kept up for so long. Only today perpetual crisis means a perpetual state of siege; an *Etat de Siège* à la Camus which can degenerate into the concentration camp world of *1984*, and very naturally threatens to do so.

The world in which we live has suffered what somebody called a compound fracture of the illusions, and along with its illusions its self-confidence has broken too. The crescendo of confidence in man which we can follow from the great days of the quattrocento has burst in a series of apparently overwhelming failures. Men run to hide their fears in the lap of God, and the new favour which religion finds in the eyes of intellectuals is symptomatic of what many observers diagnose as loss of nerve. In the midst of despair, "the freedom of obedience" acquires real meaning and offers real relief from too much doubt and too many defeats. Belief and acceptance offer patent medicines for the soul: acceptance of formulas, acceptance of norms, acceptance of a state of things in which non-acceptance means sabotage; in which questioning, scepticism, criticism, mean sabotage; in which individuals assent to the suppression of the individual and of individuality because dissent "makes trouble," and conformity means relief from too-insoluble problems. They assent to their own suppression because it gives them the opportunity of melting away among a protective mass of indistinguishable fellow-blanks.

This inclination must not be exaggerated, or unwisely attacked. Dissent carries its own dogma and its own hysteria; blatant nonconformity can be as offensive, as dangerous (and also as conformist in its own fashion) as blatant regimentation. But, though it would be foolish to exaggerate what are still no more than tendencies, it would be at least as foolish to underestimate their potential danger. The threat is there, if only in the bud, and the more terrible because it is so easy to succumb to it while trying to fight back. The tendency, natural enough, is to fight efficiency with counter-efficiency, organization with counter-organization, dogma with counter-dogma. To free the individual one calls for more disciplined subordination of the individual, and counter-regimentation is necessary to fight the encroaching regimentation which we fear. "Positive" action of this sort, when carefully considered, invariably turns out to be essentially negative, leading us back once more into the maze from which we seek escape.

Should this hypothesis be correct, is there then no escape from the annihilation of the individual, from his disciplined confinement, or from the ruler's overweening power? Perhaps not. But if there be hope, it lies in that very instinct for self-preservation which makes men accept the concentration camp minimum for the sake of survival. The very selfishness which persuades us to sacrifice every non-essential in order that we may be preserved, may also persuade us to question the concepts, to brave the rules, to break the trammels, which irk us.

The concentration camp state, if based on anything but sheer necessity, can and will be challenged. Though it be armed with all the machinery of totalitarian control, it still needs its moral justification lest disillusion, drabness, and resentment clog the works. Yet all justifications, all formulas of the collective will, become irrelevant as soon as they come up against that ultimate reality: man's conception of his own convenience. Could salvation lie in a return to selfishness, to what used to be called enlightened self-interest, to a utilitarianism cleared of the rationalizations and the moral frills that weighed it down from birth?[15] Perhaps the pressure of moral and social forces that have been used to stifling ends would be eased by emancipation from moral and social thinking. Such self-assertion might allow the individual to recover his freedom of judgment, or at any rate of manoeuvre, to distinguish his own interests and try to follow them selfishly and sanely.

The freedom of the individual does not lie in non-existent "natural laws," or in artificial constitutional principles. Helvetius told us once upon a time that principles and laws only have meaning in relation to social utility. We should have been warned that social utility has nothing

in common with private utility except by chance; that it has its impersonal implications and necessities, without solicitude or scruple for the individual. We paid no heed. Perhaps we thought no one would read Helvetius. Yet, though only a few did, his thought was obvious, and his concept holds good in democracy or concentration camp. There is no protection to be found in inevitably social-minded codes. There is no freedom to be found under the law, except the freedom of obedience—a nonsense that men too seldom challenge. There is no freedom in obedience: there must be constraint in conformity.

Montesquieu once argued that men do not conform because they are free. He held that freedom is the power *not* to conform to laws, and rules, and accepted standards: "La liberté est en nous une imperfection: nous sommes libres et incertains, parce que nous ne savons pas certainement ce qui nous est le plus convenable." This is the terror of today; and it is from this that the concentration camp offers its factitious escape into conformity with a General Will to which we surrender our incertitude—and also our freedom. But should we want to escape from the totalitarian rule of the General Will, this "imperfection" is our greatest hope. Bertrand Russell, after all, attributes the greatness of the Greeks in individual achievement to their political incompetence.[16] The connection is justifiable.

Ultimately, the freedom of the individual lies in his natural and inescapable selfishness. Hobbes, who recognized this, tried to base a theory of state upon it. It does not seem that any practical political structure (whatever its label, or theoretical justification) has been able to ignore the reality which he presented.

But while selfishness, as Hobbes reminds us, can lead to a social contract (and eventually to social bondage), it can also lead to breaking it. Faced with the unpleasant results of his social and principal activities, man can take refuge in opportunism. With the gap between rulers and ruled becoming greater, with the discrepancy between word and fact becoming greater, only the will to disregard all rules in a policy of selfish opportunism can save the individual.[17]

At the moment, the individual struggles to preserve his freedom by trying to group and organize against encroaching powers. But counter-organization cannot destroy the concentration camp: it can only build new ones. In the struggle between organizations, the most highly organized must win. The concentration camp is the essence and the quintessence of organization. Only disorganization, disunity, the denial of collective reality, can harm it and offer hope of its destruction.

NOTES

1 "The Garrison State and Specialists on Violence," in *Analysis of Political Behaviour* (Oxford, 1947).

2 *The Ruling Class* (New York, 1939), 142 and *passim*. For an excellent study of the German army, much to my point, see L. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Nemesis of Fate* (New York, 1954).

3 Michels, *Les Partis politiques* (Paris, 1919), 152, 153.

4 Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, 2 vols. (London, 1902); Michels, *Les Partis politiques*; Mosca, *The Ruling Class*; Duverger, *Les Partis politiques* (Paris, 1951); McKenzie, *British Political Parties* (London, 1955). These are the basic works.

5 Michels, *Les Partis politiques*, 100ff.; McCallum and Readman, *British General Election of 1945* (London, 1947), 87; Nicholas, *British General Election of 1950* (London, 1951), 38, 39, 263.

6 See the careers of political aspirants in the United States, which take for granted the necessity of joining the locally dominant party be it, for example, Republican in Oregon (at least till recently), or Democrat in the solid South. There are similar political realities in Canada.

7 Goldstein, *The Government of British Trade Unions* (London, 1950), 236, 245. Business can also be mobilized and supervised in the service of the state, as Mussolini knew and Peron has recently discovered; cf. *Time*, March 7, 1955.

8 Proudhon had noted it in his *Carnets*, and commented on the worker as a beast of burden, interested only in eating, drinking, sleeping, and making love. Blanqui proposed to overcome it by setting up a dictatorship until the unpredictable time when the people had been re-educated. There is also interesting mention of this tendency in *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1840, IX, 407.

9 *The Dangers of Obedience* (London, 1930), 6.

10 I refer to the discussion in his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la Conscience* (Genève, 1945), and especially to p. 105.

11 *La Russie en 1839* (Paris, 1843).

12 Jodl, *Nuremberg Record*, XV, 295; Wheeler-Bennett, *Nemesis of Fate*, 636.

13 Michels, *Les Partis politiques*, 300; Goldstein, *British Trade Unions*, 218; see my article, "Political Language and Political Realities," *Cambridge Journal*, April 1954.

14 Goldstein, *British Trade Unions*, 216ff.

15 What chance was there for "scientific" utilitarianism, when the young Bentham proclaimed, "Has a man talents? He owes them to his country in every way in which they can be serviceable." *Works*, ed. Bowring, X, 73. There was nothing new here except the road which utilitarians took to justify ultimately the same old things. From Bentham to J. S. Mill, Chesterton's admirable English drunkard had nothing on them. Another would-be-objective philosophy, Existentialism, failed in the same manner. It is significant that the play version of Camus' *La Peste* was called *L'Etat de Siège*. In it the existentialist hero loses his freedom by choosing to fight the plague, new ruler, on its own terms rather than on his. The pundits of Existentialism, like those of Utilitarianism, gelded their theories by forcing social responsibility on them.

16 *Authority and the Individual* (New York, 1949), 16.

17 On a different, but parallel plane, André Gide notes in his *Journal, 1939–1949* (Paris, 1954), 296 (February 24, 1946): "Le monde ne sera sauvé, s'il peut l'être, que par des insoumis."

George Sand's Thought in 1833

Pierre Reboul

Zola believed he was founding the experimental novel; the author of *Lélia* experimented with ideas in the novel. Let us remember that writers find the underpinnings (the expression is Stendhal's) of their works as much in literature as in their experience. *Quasi cursores lampada tradunt*: literature has its own entrenchments against reality.

There are, in *Lélia*, a psychological study and a network of ideas. It is the network that concerns us here; we should like to inquire into the influences at work on George Sand when she wrote this bizarre book, at the end of 1832 and the beginning of 1833.* In the best authenticated influences we shall be able to seize upon her originality of the moment and to discern her most deep-seated avowals. . . .

*On the genesis of *Lélia*, cf. the Appendix. I am using as my sole authority the text of 1833, infinitely more rewarding than that of 1839. Perhaps it is not superfluous at this point to give a résumé of the content of *Lélia* (1833). The undertaking is, however, a difficult one, since *Lélia*, at times a lyrical narrative, at other times a passionate meditation, is not—to use Jean Prévost's definition of a novel—"une histoire qu'on raconte." The poet Sténio, symbolizing youth, loves Lélia, a brilliant but cold woman with a tortured soul who, as a result of unhappy experiences, has decided to love no more since love, for her, is impossible. Lélia is on friendly terms with a former convict, Trenmor, an inveterate gambler, once imprisoned for larceny, now a perfect sage (the symbol of maturity). She inspires irresistible desires in the Irish monk, Magnus, a childlike person who is both mystical and sensual. Finally, Lélia undertakes to love Sténio, but, ever frigid, leaves him to her sister Pulchérie, a courtesan. At this point, Sténio gives himself over to debauchery, Lélia turns to meditation, Magnus goes back to the life of a recluse. Trenmor tears Sténio away from the suicidal path he is taking and promises to bring Lélia back to him. But Sténio kills himself, and as Lélia mourns over his dead body she is strangled by Magnus. All's well that ends ill: exit Trenmor, still the perfect sage. . . . The interest of the work lies less in this résumé, which is in any case symbolic, than in an interplay of ideas relative to God, death, love, society, in remarkable psychological analyses, and in the crudity of certain scenes that are terribly true to life. The version of 1839 constitutes another novel entirely; preachy and well-intentioned, its interest is merely historical.

The thought of *Lélia*? perhaps the book consists merely of thoughts; at least there is some thought. Unable to draw up a phenomenology of doubt, Sand does not resolve her thought into a system; she describes and analyses, observes and interrogates—giving a testimony, not a message. She attempts to think, or tries out thoughts, rather than thinks.

According to its author, *Lélia* is a book in which "Thought takes a fancy to attack Enthusiasm."[1] Those planks to which, according to Nietzsche, one clings "in the storms of existence," Love, Man, Nature, even God, Sand abrades or breaks in the very act of examination. Though not going so far as to invent an existential conception of man, she reaches the stage of Sartrian *nausée* or better still that of Cartesian doubt prior to the *cogito*. After *A Rebours*, Huysmans had to choose between the cross and the pistol; after *Lélia*, Sand (if we take for granted that she was fully conscious of her work's implications[2]) had to choose between death and forgetting. She chose to forget; love "quand même" and work are the best opiates.

But in *Lélia*, earthly love could be only an inane enthusiasm or a hypocritical compromise; man drags his destiny after him as a ball-and-chain; everywhere, everything is dying, time will soon have reached its fullness—history is dilapidation—God hovers over all things like a great silence. . . . And Lélia refuses to close her eyes—can one unknow what one knows? She refuses, however, to accept what she sees—can one renounce the good that one conceives? In short, she finds herself on the threshold of a philosophy of the absurd; grace to cross it is neither given nor withheld from her.

Thus, no coherent system, but passionate meditations and a sheaf of questionings. Man always lives beyond himself. An enormous wave of love carries him towards the unknown, but abandons him, pitiful and plaintive, on some lacerating reef. AMORI ET DOLORI SACRUM. . . . These words sum up all mankind; they sum up *Lélia*.

I *Amori* . . .

Love, not lovers; the former appears, in close-ups, in the sensual epicureanism of Pulchérie, the cordial enthusiasm of Sténio, the melancholic "impotence" of Lélia, and the serene detachment of Trenmore.[3]

The theme of impotency is a barrier to our immediate comprehension of the book, being too particularized not to weaken general arguments. Gradually, one becomes aware of its interest, which is metaphysical—for Lélia attacks God because of this very particularity. Above all, it allows George Sand to isolate certain elements—by suppressing hypothetically all sexual enjoyment she succeeds in highlighting the moral

and sociological aspects of love, and Lélia attacks men in general. Whether it be a question of marriage, of passion, or of prostitution, she attacks man or society—never woman. Except through some miracle, love could never be, here below, other than the dream of a dream; it is nothing but sexual enjoyment (sometimes refused) and servitude. . . .

This revolt was not a new one. But Sand does not battle on the conventional tactical positions of passion. Misfortune, in her view, is consubstantial with love, which is not possible because society has corrupted man. Here we go beyond the sweeping considerations of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* or the facile antitheses of Dumas' *Antony*. This greater depth of view Sand owes to Sénancour and especially to Nodier.[4]

Love does not occupy the focal point of Sénancour's *Obermann*, but is occasionally treated in several lines or pages of the hero's recollections. The latter discusses his impotence in the most spiritual acceptation of the term. Sand does not seem to have borrowed greatly here, except perhaps, first, in the admirable justification of the fallen woman which she transposes to fit the case of the prostitute, and second, generally speaking, in the rejection of the mass notion according to which, despite all appearances, the existence of love was taken for granted: she showed its machinery, motions, and consequences, without ever inquiring into its essence. Sénancour, precisely, reflected upon love itself, and under that scrutiny love disintegrated.

Sand contracted more precise debts towards Nodier,[5] with whose long article "De l'amour et de son influence" she was acquainted. Its author showed the evolution of feeling, from the innocent incests of primitive families, to contemporary society in which love no longer counted. This article explains the turning-point in Sand's work. *Indiana* and *Valentine* had been novels of the heart; *Lélia* is a novel of the head. Love is not merely accepted in the latter, naïvely, as an atom of the soul; Sand splits it by her conceptual analysis. This appears in all the avatars of her story, from the "jeux interdits" of the adolescent sisters, through the sensual renouncements of Pulchérie and the illusions of Sténio, to the reversals suffered by Lélia. Nodier made Sand aware of the contemporary crisis in matters of love and she was only too happy to find this justification for her own amorous ill-success.

If Sténio's blind enthusiasm carries him to his goal which is death, Lélia's lucidity brings with it the impotence of love; she knows too well what love should be, and what it fails to be. There is apparently, of course, the same impotency in Obermann, but the context is different. Lélia's strong-mindedness is her weak point; Obermann's weak-mindedness is part of his very love. This does not mean that Sand owes noth-

ing to Sénancour. Why, in any case, limit herself to *Obermann*? When Lélia reproaches herself for having loved badly ("ne sachant où dépenser ma vigueur intellectuelle, je la jetais rampante aux pieds d'une idole créée par mon culte") she is probably remembering Sénancour's *Méditations d'un solitaire inconnu*: "Si vous n'idolâtrez pas la femme que vous avez choisie, vous ne serez qu'un amant vulgaire."

If lovers are blind worshippers, it is because their love erroneously stops at man. The powerlessness to love, in its concrete reality, symbolizes a reality more important still: all love tends ultimately towards God; but the very infirmity of the lover prevents him from getting beyond the beloved—a *qui pro quo* always exists. From this there result disappointments, and deception. The text of the *Imitation of Christ*[6] comes to mind: "Love is born of God . . . it cannot come to rest except in God, above all created things"; to which Sténio provides an echo: "I understand, Lélia, alas, I understand! You have love for God only. Only in Heaven can your soul find rest and life." It was precisely this passage from the *Imitation* that was quoted at the end of Nodier's article "De l'amour." It cannot be claimed outright that Sand took it from Nodier. But it was he who gave her the idea of crowning a theory of human love with a conception of *amor dei* and of placing the love of the unknown in that of the known, like a mine—Sand should have been a mystic.[7] The impression of distress, conveyed by *Lélia*, is brought on by spiritual dryness. Man possesses the infinite, but negatively; it is the emptiness of his own heart. Death is the only key to love. The ending of *Lélia*, in which two meteors placed side by side represent the union of two hearts, illustrates this sentence of Nodier's *Adèle*: "Cela n'est pas une chose de la terre que l'amour! C'est la première conquête de l'homme qui ressuscite. Laissez-moi partir."[8] From this angle, the psychology becomes evident; Lélia is altogether one of those beings "qui sont condamnées à l'amour de l'impossible, . . . qui ont la faculté déplorable de concevoir, d'embrasser en imagination des voluptés devant lesquelles toutes celles de la terre se dégradent et s'anéantissent. . . ."[9]

Thus, where there is lucidity, there is no love. It is only in the innocent perverseness of Pulchérie or the gracious infatuation of Sténio that love is present. But can one "delude oneself"? Love condemns man to suffer. . . .

II . . . *et dolori* . . .

Man aspires to the immutable. His condition situates him in space and time, and grief is born of time—that death of succeeding moments, a fearful evolution. A meditation on love is a meditation on time and, ultimately, as it were, a philosophy of history. Lélia affirms that the end

of time is at hand. "We are not in agreement as to the age of the world," she says to Sténio, who has faith in progress. According to Lélia, everything goes from bad to worse. Later on, Sand was to think just the contrary—before *Lélia* she had scarcely given the subject a thought. But *Lélia* is an indictment of time, the enemy that one kills only by killing oneself: "I accuse the great law of time, which ordains that everything shall wear itself out and come to an end" (II, 29). Undoubtedly the grievous intent of time, which precisely forms the central theme of *Obermann*, inspired George Sand.[10] But it is easier to assume that the simpler, more conceptual thought of Nodier was more readily accessible to her. The texts cited in the appendix to this article make it possible to establish the fact that Sand appreciated in Nodier the pessimistic conception of time: history is decadence. This is the doctrine of Lélia and the one that Nodier had set forth in his articles on love and perfectibility:

> On a demandé parfois d'où venoit cette révolution? Elle venoit d'où vient l'agonie de tout ce qui a vécu, de la nécessité de mourir commune à tous les êtres créés, et dont le vain savoir des sophistes[11] n'a préservé jusqu'ici ni les individus ni l'espèce. Pour peu que vous la regardiez attentivement, vous lui trouverez toutes les conditions de cette dernière crise de la vie, les angoisses de la dissolution et les besoins du changement, et des convulsions de douleur et des lueurs d'apothéose. C'est tout simplement que Dieu a écrit sur le front des espèces comme sur celui des individus: "Vous êtes nés de la poussière et vous retournerez à la poussière." ("De l'amour")

The world is in its death throes; the great social bodies are in their final convulsions. Literature becomes frenzied in echo of this death which will be followed by rebirth:

> Vous ne concevez pas pourquoi la plus haute expression du génie de l'homme est devenue convulsive comme un râle, et plaintive comme un soupir qu'un soupir ne suivra jamais. . . . Et si vous mettez la main sur la place où palpitoit le cœur du corps social, vous sentirez cependant qu'il ne bat plus.

This extract could serve as an epigraph to *Lélia*, in which Sand expresses the dying agony of individuals, religions, sciences, and societies. Sénancour had treated this theme with simple profundity. Sand revamped it with systematic vigour. Nodier had expressed the idea that the contemporary world had no longer a present, that at the moment of its eclipse it was trying to recapture its past or to hurl itself towards an illusory future, that it was clinging to cheerless, futile science as though it were a lifebuoy, or was keeping its eyes shut in order to go

on believing in perfectibility. Sand revived these themes also, and no doubt owed something to Balzac in her manner of treating them. In the course of a "bal masqué," Lélia mocks those guests whose only pleasure lies in escaping from themselves through the revival of an outmoded form. This brings to mind Raphaël's visit to the Antiquarian in *La Peau de chagrin*, where Balzac pities his contemporaries for being "uprooted from the present."[12]

Depicting the world's grief is not original in itself. But we have here a theory of suffering. The author of *Lélia au rocher* has thought of Christ—every being here below experiences his own calvary.[13] The only élite is a dolorous one; Trenmor's greatness lies in what he endures. Suffering is presented as a thing of great worth, almost as a way of life (II, 30):

> J'ai découvert, je pense, ce qui me soutient encore dans cette vie de désenchantement et de lassitude: c'est la souffrance. La souffrance excite, ranime, irrite les nerfs; elle fait saigner le cœur, elle abrège l'agonie. C'est la convulsion violente, terrible, qui nous relève de terre et nous donne la force de nous dresser vers le ciel pour maudire et crier ... souffrons! cela vaut mieux que de dormir.... Le doute s'introduit dans l'âme qui rêve, la foi descend dans l'âme qui souffre.... Reviens donc, ô ma douleur! Pourquoi m'as-tu quittée? Si je ne puis avoir d'autre ami que toi, du moins je ne veux pas te perdre. N'es-tu pas mon héritage et mon lot? C'est par toi seul que l'homme est grand.... C'est toi, ô douleur sublime, qui ... nous mets à part, et nous place, brebis au désert, sous la main du pasteur céleste qui nous regarde, nous plaint, en attendant peut-être qu'il nous console!
>
> Oh! l'homme qui n'a pas souffert n'est rien! C'est un être incomplet, une force inutile, une matière brute et sans valeur, que le ciseau de l'ouvrier brisera peut-être en essayant de le façonner.[14]

What characterizes this thought is that suffering is presented as good in itself, being, one might say, assimilated to the very essence of man. To suffer is to live, to know that one lives and that one is sure of a life hereafter. No positive religion, to Sand's mind, affords a justification for this "mystique" of suffering. Moreover, the author affirms and does not prove. She has, however, left information which leads us to think that she was referring to Nodier's expiatory doctrine, that to suffer is to live, because it is expiation. Lélia complains to God (II, 27) that she is punished for sins which she did not commit; she is expiating some former existence. Envisaging her death, she asks herself what form she desires to have *post mortem*; is this not a discreet allusion to palingenesis? A favourable rebirth is possible only through suffering: "Alas, was I guilty even before birth?" Ballanche answered in the affirmative.[15] Nodier also:

O mon ami! sois sûr qu'il y a dans le monde où nous habitons, des âmes punies d'une faute ancienne, punies peut-être d'une faute à venir indispensable, des âmes d'expiation qui portent pour une génération le poids des vengeances de Dieu, qui sont condamnées à l'amour de l'impossible, comme si la suprême puissance qui ne peut sans contrevenir à ses décrets leur ôter l'infini dans l'éternité, avoit voulu leur donner le néant dans le présent.[16]

Nodier had thus consigned to writing the very formula, the chemical symbol of Lélia! We think inevitably of René, Obermann, Manfred, but first and foremost we think of Nodier's works—it is there that we find the true origin of Lélia. There Sand discovered her conception of time, and the notion of palingenesis which gives a hypothetical meaning to the crosses men must bear (*Lélia*, II, 29):

Dieu ploiera l'univers comme un vêtement qu'on jette au vent, comme un manteau usé qu'on dépouille parce qu'on n'en veut plus. Alors Dieu seul *sera*. Alors, peut-être, sa gloire et sa puissance éclateront sans voiles. Mais qui les contemplera? De nouvelles races naîtront-elles sur notre poussière pour voir ou pour deviner celui qui crée et qui détruit?

Thus did Nodier announce the death of humanity and the birth of a new species, *comprehensive man.*

Here suffering has not merely the banal utility of learning by experience. Beyond it there lies a "mystique" of passion and a doctrine of expiation—a discreet esoterism, hinted at rather than affirmed, enunciated rather than envisioned, more hypothetical than dogmatic.

III . . . *sacrum*

Man is destined to suffer and to love—these constitute his life and his after-life; through this double destiny, he escapes the *jus civile* and is subject to the *jus divinum*. The end of man is thus a divine one. God is present in *Lélia*—all the more so in that his existence and his goodness are doubted. For Sand in 1833, as for Chateaubriand, Bonald, Ballanche, or Nodier, humanity is a pyramid clinging at its apex to God (the imagery is Chateaubriand's). But Lélia is in doubt, like a mountain-climber made uneasy by a toe-hold which he does not see. The author moreover does not take upon herself the temporary negations of her chief character; *Lélia* is a work that is ideally clinical and non-dogmatic. The book seems to present an esoteric concept of God. As in the work of Saint-Martin and Ballanche, the accent is placed on the gospel of love.[17] Yet this God unknowable is the master of both good and evil (*Lélia*, I, 3):

Vous me demandez si j'adore l'esprit du mal! L'esprit du mal et l'esprit du bien, c'est un seul esprit, c'est Dieu; c'est la volonté inconnue et mystérieuse qui est au-dessus de nos volontés. Le bien et le mal, ce sont des distinctions que nous avons créées. Dieu ne les connaît pas plus que le bonheur ou l'infortune.

The germ of this idea, which reduces God to the life-principle, quite apart from all qualification or appreciation, had been discovered by Sand in *Obermann*, where Sénancour tries to show the necessity of things and to ridicule man who passes judgments on them. In his *Rêveries* especially, one finds a multiplicity of remarks such as the following:

Tout est bon dans la nature, parce que la nature contenant tout, emploie tout. Tout est indifférent dans la nature, parce que la nature étant seule, n'est en rapport avec rien d'extérieur. Tout est beau dans la nature. Comme elle est entière, elle est toujours une; comme elle est une, elle est toujours symétrique; comme elle existe essentiellement, elle remplit sa fin qui est de subsister.[18]

But the creation, victim of time, a prey to evil, accuses the creator. Lélia's cross is to love and at the same time to doubt her love. There are breaks in her continued belief in God. She echoes Nodier's passage in "De l'amour":

Le dernier chant du génie est un chant de désespoir. C'est cette clameur qu'on entendit un jour au milieu de la mer, et qui annonça au monde épouvanté *que Dieu étoit mort.*

Not that Lélia is a complete atheist—she experiments with doubt, it is her life and she endures it. Doubt itself is sacred, for it is suffering. It is piety, for it is expiation. In another existence, she will no longer doubt; like Trenmor, she will have come to know God, before contemplating him in all his glory.

Between that which consecrates and man who is consecrated to suffering, is there a perceptible link? Why not pass from doubt to negation,[19] from negation to forgetting? God, whom Lélia accuses and about whom she has doubts, remains present in her consciousness—through love, which reveals him by postulating him; through dreams also, which rend the veil surrounding him. Lélia tells of the horrors of her nights. She sometimes relives the history of the world. She contemplates unknown creatures. She does not admit that the world of dreams is the result of pure chance. It is, if not revelation, at least allusion; there is something in it of the sacred. It is the outcropping of Reality—both promise and menace, recompense and chastisement, suffering and sign of election. Sand hardly makes her thought explicit, perhaps because

she cannot *believe*; she suspects, and one must not exaggerate her faith in dreams any more than her doubts. But there appears to be no uncertainty regarding her reference to more precise doctrines—dreams, even when poignant, deliver man from his condition by doing away with time. As in the works of Sénancour, Ballanche, or Nodier, dreams make man a seer. But in *Lélia* they are, more often than not, a revelation of the past, instants of past time reappearing in semi-consciousness. Dreams thus reveal that meeting-place of moments called eternity. The individual relives world history and contemplates, as he assumes it, human destiny.

Thus dreams and love alike awaken man out of this life's fatal slumber; they reveal to him, beyond temporal and spatial semblances, an absolute towards which he must reach forth through suffering, in order to attain to the true life.

Between God and the absence of God, between good and evil, between inevitable and impossible love, between passion and inpassiveness, Sand did not find her true course; a flower from Balzac, others from Sénancour, an armful from Nodier (and a deal of fragrance from Chateaubriand or Byron)—these do not constitute a bouquet. But *Lélia* cannot be reduced to these exterior elements, which Sand appropriated minus their context of certitude; she may have borrowed this, that, and the other, but faith she never borrowed. The absolute is merely conjectured, God postulated, love foreshadowed. Even if Lélia, a bit ridiculously, climbs a rock in order to vaticinate, there is no trace of the theosophist in Sand herself. No revelation whatsoever, simply exigencies, postulations, apprehensions, and a prolonged cry of pain.

Therein resides the originality of *Lélia*. In it the author casts into the night borrowed truths like glowing embers which held in the hand both burn it and are put out by it. Only suffering is sure. Only suffering can permit man to put his existence to the test, and to anticipate the true life. There is nothing exemplary about Lélia; she embodies an idea, not a precept. Whereas Trenmor is almost a Man of Providence, she is entirely a Woman of Destiny.[20]

Lélia is neither uniquely nor essentially a confession. It is an attempt to give concrete form to philosophical thoughts; to express the inexpressible suffering of man who knows that he knows nothing with certainty and who nevertheless cannot forego knowledge. It is the novel of an existence desiring essences of which it is unaware, and which it doubts, a powerful effort towards the destruction of all idols in favour of a true God, so completely *absconditus* that he leaves created beings almost in emptiness. What we have here, as Sainte-Beuve put it, is a corrosive

liquid which has had no detrimental effect upon the pure metal of the vase that held it—and this because the author played with ideas, as a child plays with firearms. The book is, or at least Sand must have wanted it to be, a far-off echo of the anguish in the Garden, eighteen hundred and thirty-three years before.

APPENDIX

A. The Genesis of *Lélia*

The correspondence between Gustave Planche and Sand, edited by M. Jacques Viens, makes it possible to reconstruct the genesis of *Lélia* more reliably than from the accounts given by George Sand in the preface of the definitive edition and in her *Histoire de ma vie*. On December 18, 1832, having shown Sand's manuscript to Buloz, editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Planche wrote to her: "he likened *Trenmor* to Valentine, to Indiana, to Melchior, to the marchioness. In his far from sovereign wisdom, he considers your rehabilitated-gambler story inferior to your four preceding narrations. . . . I agreed that *Trenmor* is not so simple and lively as the narratives you gave to Dupuy and to Pichot. . . . I added that Lélia and Sténio were illuminated by a light too infrequent and too meagre." Thus it can be established that by the end of 1832, Planche had offered Buloz a manuscript doubtless complete, and in all likelihood entitled "Trenmor" (Planche underlines this name and, moreover, uses it to designate a narrative), in which the melancholy Lélia and Sténio the enthusiast were given small, ill-defined roles, and in which, consequently, the theme of impotence was not treated, at least explicitly. We can also accept the fact that the passages concerning Trenmor's past come from this first state of the text, wherein a reformed criminal tries to reconcile two estranged lovers. We thus owe *Lélia* to Buloz's rejection of the original manuscript.

On December 27, Planche again wrote to George Sand: "Make haste to finish the book of which, according to you, I am bound to disapprove, and I shall lose no time in pulling it to pieces with that disinterestedness you know so well. . . ." Thus, somewhere between the 18th and the 27th of December Sand conceived the idea of Lélia's total pessimism and impotency. Having lost one battle, she undertook to win another on the very same field. No longer was she sparing of light on Lélia, who now occupied the position of importance. Sand had written a new book. A little later on, doubtless, she thought of utilizing her former text.

As early as February 23, 1833, and again on April 8, Gustave Planche was already analysing *Lélia*, putting into practice his promised *autopsy*, not of course on a cadaver, but on a living body, almost in fact one about to be born.[21] M. Regard, in his unpublished thesis on Planche, had indubitably drawn from the texts in question the same conclusions as my own. A summary of the genesis of *Lélia* seemed to me indispensable at this point, and I therefore beg his indulgence.

But to continue: on March 9, Sand read to Sainte-Beuve (now first con-

cerned in the matter) a new section of *Lélia*, on which he commented enthusiastically the following day. We may suppose that this was precisely the part he published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on May 15, 1833. In any case, on May 5, Sand sent him the first of the book (borrowed from "Trenmor"), requesting his severe criticism.

The author worked over her novel until the last possible moment. Thus she was able to insert in the orgy scene the *Enno Ebrioso*, which Musset had specifically written for it at the request of Buloz, and to attribute to Sténio (as Madame Pailleron has pointed out) certain physical attributes of the poet himself. In keeping with her usual practice, she was careless in correcting the proofs, as is shown by the following unpublished and undated letter: "Mon cher Dupuy, Planche est aveugle et je n'ai jamais su la ponctuation. Veuillez vous charger de corriger celle de ces deux épreuves, et faites le vous-même, afin que le sens ne soit pas altéré." (Chantilly, Lovenjoul MS. collection, E 864, fol. 224)

Professor Jean Pommier, Curator of the Spoelberch de Lovenjoul Collection, has proved in his *Variétés sur Alfred de Musset et son théâtre* that *Lélia* was published, almost certainly, on July 31, 1833.

B. George Sand and Charles Nodier

I have shown, in this article, the great influence of Charles Nodier, whose first six volumes had appeared in 1832. Two unpublished letters from George Sand to Emile Paultre justify my having done so. I reproduce here below the passages which concern Nodier; the first bears a post-office stamp dated August 25, 1832:

> . . . J'aime bien mieux vous parler de Ch. Nodier. Au moins là rien n'est effrayant pour l'avenir, si ce n'est à vos yeux peut-être la longévité de ce digne écrivain. Eh bien mon ami je veux vous dire que vous êtes une *ganache*, que vous m'avez envoyé sans vous en douter le plus joli et le plus amusant article qui soit sorti de la tête d'un homme. Si Nodier n'eut jamais fait ni contes ni romans, chose qu'il fait rarement bien et qui ne sont pas à sa taille, s'il se fut borné à écrire sur les sciences, sur la philosophie, sur les religions, avec son âme poétique, son style brillant, sa manière naïve, s'il eut voulu faire un ouvrage complet dans le goût de l'article *resurrection* que vous m'avez envoyé, c'eut été le plus beau livre de l'esprit humain et Nodier serait ce qu'il doit être: le premier de nos écrivains, le plus bizarre, le plus original, le plus profond, le plus spirituel, le plus étonnant, le plus universel. Mais Nodier n'eut pas vécu à ce métier; car peu de gens auraient compris et gouté un pareil livre, bien peu je le parie se sont donné la peine d'achever son article. Ce livre eut été la bible de quelques savans, de quelques artistes ou de quelques esprits ignorans mais rêveurs et ascétiques comme le mien. Le talent de Nodier, son vrai talent à lui ne pouvait pas être populaire. Il est exceptionnel. Il est unique. Il faut pourtant bien vivre de son talent et Nodier a fait des contes, des romans, de véritables pastiches sans invention, sans réalité, sans goût. Son style n'allait point à ces compositions aussi son style fatigue, sa manière endort, son récit assomme, oui, sous la forme de romancier, Nodier est

fort ennuyeux et je vous le livre. Mais pour l'amour de Dieu relisez cet article, prenez votre tems, allez au fond des bois d'aulnay ou St. Germain, ne vous effarouchez pas de quelques mots scientifiques. Il y en a fort peu qui ne soient familiers à tous ceux qui ont les simples notions d'histoire naturelle. Suivez son raisonnement, son rêve, son utopie, et si au bout du compte vous ne croyez pas à la résurrection, du moins vous serez au désespoir de ne pouvoir y croire. Votre jugement frivole et précipité sur ce chef d'œuvre m'a bien étonné ... je m'étonne que le titre ne vous ait pas fait passer par dessus la froideur de la première page, car vous n'avez jamais été au dela? si vous l'avez fait n'en convenez pas, mentez plutôt. La résurrection! ce grand problème traité par un savant qui est à la fois un poète! vous voyez bien qu'il n'y a qu'un Nodier dans le monde.... J'étais l'autre jour sur le point d'écrire à Nodier pour le remercier d'avoir écrit pour moi. Quelle fatuité! Aussi je m'en suis tenu à l'intention. (Lovenjoul, E 915, ff. 8–10.)

On September 3, Sand goes on with the same subject:

... la conscience de cet espoir [dans le progrès] n'est pas foncièrement dans mon cœur, je vous l'avoue, mon ami, et c'est un de mes plus grands chagrins.... il y a des instans où au moindre découragement dans mon entreprise, je reviens à cette triste croyance que l'homme est incorrigible et que l'espèce ne s'améliore pas, *qu'elle perd d'un côté ce qu'elle gagne de l'autre*. C'est Jean Jacques, votre Jean Jacques et le mien qui disait cela. Aussi je ne pourrai jamais être de votre avis sur Nodier et sur les Moralistes sombres, que vous accusez d'être des talens inutiles ou dangereux. Moi, je n'ai de sympathies à présent qu'avec ces hommes là. A votre âge, j'étais tout Locke, tout Condillac, tout Montesquieu, tout Machiavel.... J'ai vieilli et je me suis lassé de l'homme et de son avenir et du mien et de tout. Je me suis renfermé dans un abominable égoïsme. Tout ce qui n'est pas moi c'est à dire, mes enfans, mon amant et mes amis, n'est absolument rien pour moi. Est-ce sécheresse de cœur? Est-ce ignorance? est-ce ineptie? peut-être, mais chez Nodier ce ne peuvent être ces deux derniers points. Je suis sûre, mon ami, que cet homme là en sait bien plus long que vous et moi sur toutes choses et qu'il n'appartient ni à vous ni à moi de juger s'il n'a recueilli de ses études que des *lambeaux de science, que des parcelles d'idées*. Oh mon ami! prenez garde, vous avez vingt ans et vous décidez ainsi sur l'homme qui a travaillé 50 ans. Peut-être sommes nous injustes tous deux vous dans votre mépris, moi dans mon enthousiasme, mais prenez garde vous qui êtes si au dessus de votre âge sous tous les rapports de retomber quelquefois dans cette légéreté superbe avec laquelle notre génération se permet de traiter l'ancienne. Au reste, on ne dispose pas de ses sympathies. Je le sais. Il y en a que je ne vous pardonnerais pas, mais toutes celles que je vous connais sont motivés de manière à assurer mon estime pour vous. C'est pourquoi nos discussions quoique fréquentes ne nous attristeront jamais. Vous croyez au progrès. C'est une vertu. Moi je ne l'espère plus, c'est un malheur. Je vous admire, vous

me plaindrez. Et puis j'ai été jeune. Je m'en souviens, et je conçois les systèmes que je ne partage plus. Dieu vous préserve, ô mes amis, d'user la vie aussi vite que j'ai usé la mienne. (*Ibid.*, ff. 11–13.)

It is interesting to note that this last sentence is essentially the summing up of a letter from Lélia to Sténio (*Lélia*, I, 5).

NOTES

1 Preface of the first edition of the *Secrétaire Intime*. Sand was careful not to reproduce this text in her Complete Works. Having recognized that the majority of men owe their bliss to moral blindness, she asks: "Cannot poetry reach beyond the limits of humdrum felicity and dogged credulity? Has it not the right to take as the subject of its investigations the exceptional sufferers who go from disillusionment to despair, from despair to doubt, from doubt to irony, from irony to pity, and from pity to serene and impassive resignation, to a scrupulous disdain of everything that is neither God nor Thought?" *Lélia* is a striving after lucidity.

2 We need not; the work contains a definite set of ideas, which are, after all, sincere.

3 STÉNIO: the name brings to mind an idea of strength (in the original edition, Trenmor pays a tribute to Sténio and considers him as most advanced along the path of righteousness); LELIA is the feminine of Musset's Lélio; TRENMOR: did this name, in Sand's mind, suggest something Irish? (Magnus, in the same novel, is an Irish monk.) The name brings to mind Thomas Moore, the man and his writings.

4 She wrote a criticism of *Obermann* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 30, 1833. Regarding Nodier, cf. the Appendix (B).

5 She was contemptuous about Nodier the novelist and short-story writer. However, since she had great esteem for him as a thinker, she was drawn to taking up those of his subjects which suited her. There are close resemblances between her *André* and Nodier's *Adèle*, for example. The article entitled "De l'amour" is in the 1832 edition of Nodier's *Works*.

6 Lélia mentions the *Imitation* as being among those texts she loved to read in solitude.

7 Cf. the following fine unpublished sentence from a letter to Michel de Bourges (Copy: Lovenjoul, E 887, ff. 12–23): "Il y avait trop d'orgueil à espérer que Dieu m'accepterait pour son ami, son compagnon et son égal, qu'il m'accorderait l'accès de son intimité et qu'il remplirait mon âme de joies solitaires et ineffables ... je vais reporter sur toi cet amour immense que je ne t'ai jamais entièrement donné peut-être, et que je m'efforçais depuis que j'existe de conserver à lui seul dans le secret de mon cœur."

8 Nodier, *Adèle*, letter of April 21. Karénine in his book on George Sand likens this ending to that of Heine's *Ratkliff* (in which there appear clouds, not meteors).

9 This analysis, in *Lélia*, owes much, obviously, to Chateaubriand's *René*.

10 Cf. the introduction to the *Journal intime d'Obermann*, by André Monglond, who has enumerated some of George Sand's indebtedness to Sénancour.

11 Lélia repeats: "Savoir n'est pas pouvoir." Cf. in particular, the consultation of Dr. Kreysneiffetter.

12 The influence of Balzac on the first novels of Sand might be a fruitful study, especially regarding their conception of love. As far as *Lélia* itself is concerned: (*a*) the name of Dr. Kreysneiffetter springs from the same quirk of mind that produced the scholarly Heinefettermach in *La Peau de chagrin*; (*b*) the condemnation of science, in this same book, heralds that made by George Sand in 1833; (*c*) there is a connection between the frigid Lélia and Foedora the heartless woman of whom Balzac wrote that she contained: "deux femmes séparées par le buste peut-être: l'une était froide, la tête seule semblait être amoureuse"; and also that she was "sourde, aveugle et muette en amour"—a coquette into the bargain; (*d*) Balzac's novel is *philosophical*: would Sand have published *Lélia* without that precedent? Finally, a comparison of the two works allows us to appraise the difference between their types of genius: though he philosophizes, Balzac is none the less plunged in reality up to his elbows; when he set out on the same route as the author of *Lélia*, he went much farther—as far as *Séraphita*.

13 The *Imitatio Christi* is undoubtedly evident in *Le Compagnon du tour de France*, published seven years later.

14 Musset's indebtedness to Sand is obvious.

15 Beyond the dogma of original sin, he touches upon metempsychosis. But Sand did not read the work of Ballanche until 1836, according to a letter sent to Liszt.

16 *Adèle*, letter of April 21.

17 The same predilection for St. John can be seen in the later *Consuelo* and *Jean Zyska*.

18 42nd *Rêverie*, 1809. Similarly: "Le lion n'est point criminel puisqu'il dévore sa proie. Les crimes de l'homme et ses penchans vicieux peuvent être indifférens dans la nature."

19 Lélia takes good care not to.

20 Ballanche distinguished between "Hommes de la Providence" and "Hommes du Destin": "Les hommes du Destin voient le mal répandu sur la terre; ils voient les fléaux et les maladies; ils voient les calamités générales, les misères et les infortunes de chaque individu; ils voient enfin tout ce qu'il y a de lamentable dans la condition humaine; ils ne voient que cela. Alors ils se mettent à accuser Dieu, ou à le nier. . . . la vie n'est qu'une longue douleur, un rêve pénible, une longue maladie. Nous n'existons que pour souffrir ou faire souffrir. La société, dans une si triste hypothèse, est une chose mauvaise et factice; c'est une malheureuse invention de l'homme. Cette philosophie du découragement et du désespoir revit sous plusieurs formes, selon les temps, les lieux, l'âge des peuples; mais le fond est toujours le même." (*Essai sur les institutions sociales*, I, 1.) But, I repeat, Sand in 1833 did not have *direct* knowledge of Ballanche's work. . . . The resemblance is none the less striking and significant.

21 Mme Aurore Lauth-Sand has reprinted these texts in what she entitled the *Journal intime* of G. Sand. An error transformed the 8th into the 9th April. Moreover, she does not mention that the text is in the handwriting of Gustave Planche, who thus played an unusual role in the genesis of *Lélia*.

The Canadian Writers' Conference

F. R. Scott

Some of the most valuable qualities of life in Canada are a function of her smallness. Smallness, that is, in number of people, particularly of those in positions of leadership. In every walk of life there are relatively few who count, and these few tend to know one another. Morley Callaghan has written of Canada as a club, whose members arrange matters in a friendly fashion. Scholars meet annually in one place with the learned societies; business, professional men, and trade unionists gather in their national associations. To some extent these meetings bridge the gulf between English and French Canada, though Quebec has her own separate system of oligarchic government. From the interchange among these small groups comes much of the sense of community which exists in Canada despite all the barriers erected by race, religion, language, and geography.

Have Canadian writers such a sense of community? Do they mostly know one another and work together in the same informal way, or are they isolated and cut off from themselves and from the public? What problems do they face in such a country as this, in the days of mass communication and rapid economic expansion? Have they adequate opportunities for the publication of their work? Is their concern with "the book," in any form other than a paper-back, perhaps outmoded? These are some of the questions which were placed before the first Canadian Writers' Conference, which was held at Queen's University from July 28 to July 31, 1955, when about a hundred delegates, comprising poets, novelists, publishers, editors, critics, librarians, and members of the public, helped by a generous grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, met together to examine the facts and to exchange opinions.

The Conference was carefully planned in two respects: the topics for discussion followed a logical sequence, and the organization of the prepared talks and subsequent round tables was designed to combine the formal lecture with seminar exchanges in small groups. The theme of

the Conference was "The Writer, His Media, and the Public," the "writer" being limited, for reasons of economy and numbers, to authors of poems and fiction. It was the aim of the Conference to bring together representatives of all the various groups who are related by what might be called the "literary assembly line." The producer, in this analogy, is the creative writer whose manuscript, once completed, is passed along the line to the publisher, magazine editor, or CBC programme director. If accepted, it is then distributed to the public on the printed page or through broadcast. When printed it is available in libraries and bookstores. The critic and book reviewer help to acquaint the readers with works being published, and to assess techniques and trends. All these workers on the assembly line participate in a common undertaking, however much their interests and outlook may vary; when they are all citizens of one country they have further points in common.

Such a theme lent itself naturally to a division into three parts, to each of which a conference day was devoted. The problems of the Writer were dealt with by a poet and a novelist, A. J. M. Smith and Morley Callaghan, and—from the critics' point of view—Douglas Grant. The writers' "Media" were discussed by John Gray of Macmillan's, Ralph Allen of *Maclean's* magazine, and S. P. Kite of Penguin Books (Canada) Ltd. The writers' "Public" was analysed by two speakers in close contact with it, namely Hilton Smith, Associate Director of the Toronto Public Libraries, and Robert Weaver, a programme director of CBC. Their opening statements, given in the evenings, provided the basis for the round table discussions which followed in the morning when, in three smaller groups, every member of the Conference had an opportunity of taking part. At the close of the morning the three groups came together in plenary session and the chairman of each told the whole gathering of the principal lines the discussion in his group had taken. In this way the prepared lecture was balanced by lively exchanges between individuals, and the Conference as a whole was able to develop something approaching a collective body of thought. The afternoons were entirely free for the forming and renewing of those friendships out of which a sense of community is built. On two of these afternoons, spontaneous meetings of poets took place at which new poems were read and criticized.

The theory and composition of the Conference meant that it was not so much a writers' conference as a conference on writing and its dissemination. For this reason relatively little time was spent on the art of writing itself; most of the discussion centred around the problems of

publication, of reaching an audience, and of the acceptance of the role of the writer in contemporary Canada. There was a strong feeling among the poets present, shared to some extent by the novelists, that the writer was suffering from neglect, and that steps should be taken to make the public more aware of the good writing that was available. Canadian painting has arrived, is widely recognized, and is fostered by the state-supported National Gallery. Canadian drama has its festivals and awards, and now the stimulus given by the annual Stratford performances. Music has also made important advances. Writing, it was contended, though equally entitled to attention, is largely ignored. Only two "little mags" exist in the entire country for experimental work, one university quarterly publishes and pays for short stories, but there does not exist in Canada a literary magazine of the type of *Partisan Review*, *Hudson Review* or the *Sewanee Review*, where a coterie of writers and critics maintain a constant watch for new talent and subject writers generally, both old and new, to an informed criticism. Indeed, it was remarked that criticism of Canadian literature scarcely exists at all; that few universities and schools give Canadian literature courses, and if they do are hard pressed to find copies of the books the students should read; that the Governor-General's Awards, though well intended, are a somewhat hollow gesture since they carry no money prize and the recipient is expected to pay his own way to wherever they may happen to be given out each year. When to this were added the story of Hilton Smith as to the plight of Canadian libraries, there being considerable areas of the country where the public has literally no access to books at all, and Mr. Kite's figures as to the paucity of book-stores, the picture seemed inexcusably black.

Analysing the causes of this situation and the writers' relationship to it was the principal activity at the Conference. It was A. J. M. Smith's contention that, in so far as the poet was concerned, he did not write for the public anyway but for other poets, just as the chemist writes for other chemists and the mathematician for other mathematicians. Poetry is feeling purified of the superficial; it brushes aside the polite compromises that make for ease of living in a suburban society, and hence is bound to be unpopular. He felt that Canadian poets were in fact fortunate in writing for a small but intensely interested audience of other poets and critics who were more concerned with quality than quantity. This intransigent position was respected but not shared by many other members, some of whom went so far in the other direction as to urge the poet to be also a propagandist for his own poems; it led

to the comment that Canadian poets were "a horde of amateurs," writing on Sundays or living off universities, by comparison with the fiction writers who had a more professional attitude to their work, and succeeded, in a few instances, in actually supporting themselves by their writing. Even here, however, as Morley Callaghan warned, the young writer who offers his manuscript will probably make the sad discovery that "the more angular, the more distinctive his talent, the harder it will be for him to get published." Professor Grant acknowledged the instinctive divergence between writer and public; he described the critic's true role as one of maintaining a precarious balance between the two, explaining the one to the other, and thus reducing the degree of separation.

It was in this critical atmosphere that the publishers stated their case. It was admitted that Canadian publishers did not derive any important part of their revenue from general Canadian publishing, since they drew their works from the entire English-speaking world; nevertheless, as Mr. Gray maintained, there are more and better books being published in Canada each year, and he doubted whether any Canadian novel worth publishing ever failed of finding an outlet. Of five published by his company in 1954, about 3,000 copies was the average sale, whereas novels by British or American authors usually do not sell more than 1,000 copies. He stoutly maintained his faith in the future of the hard-cover book. Mr. Allen confirmed the view that Canadians were becoming much more interested in themselves and their own country, as witnessed by the fact that *Maclean's* is able to withstand all competition from American magazines and outsells the best of them. It was this awakening curiosity in the public which led him to doubt whether any state aid to writers was needed at this time, though in discussion later, and after hearing of the successful programmes of literary fellowships in the United States sponsored by the Rockefeller, the Guggenheim, and other foundations, he admitted that he had changed his view.

Mr. Kite's account of the success of Penguin Books in reaching a mass audience with good books by the simple technique of selling at popular prices, opened up a new approach to the problem of publication. The enormous success of the paper-back, throughout the English-speaking world, suggested that one of the great barriers between writer and public was the price of books, and not a declining interest in reading or a lowering of taste. One of Penguin's very best sellers is the translation of the *Odyssey*. Moreover Penguins proved that Canadian poetry can sell in large numbers; Ralph Gustafson's *Canadian Accent*

sold 150,000 copies of which 30,000 were purchased in Canada. By contrast the "slim volume of verse" in hard cover by a contemporary Canadian poet will do well to reach the 300-400 mark, though from statistics gathered in England by Phyllis Webb it seems the situation is not very different there except for a half dozen of the best known names, such as Eliot, Spender, or Day Lewis. Until an attempt has been made to reach the public with works of Canadian authors at much lower prices than now obtain, it cannot be fairly said that the writer is neglected or that the public is not interested.

When the paper-back was examined further, however, it seemed to offer only a very partial solution to the problem that most concerned the poet and creative fiction writer. For paper-backs are intended for a mass market, and their publishers will seldom risk a new work by an unknown author—least of all an unknown poet. Even the *Penguin New Writing* series, edited by John Lehmann, was discontinued because it sold only about 25,000 copies. The young Canadian poet, novelist, or short story writer will not find his work snapped up by editors of paper-backs. With anthologies it may be different, as *Canadian Accent* showed, but anthologies do not keep the contributors alive. The difficulty, and the essential need, is to find and encourage the young writer, if literature itself is to flourish; yet in a society where almost all publishing is done for private profit, there is no easy solution. Most publishers take some risks and lose some money on new authors, and this constitutes a form of subsidy that is far from unimportant, but the more experimental the writer the less likely he is to receive this help. The *avant garde* rely on little magazines or private presses such as, in Canada, First Statement Press or Contact Press, and in the United States on the more courageous literary quarterlies as well. Many people at the Conference felt that some form of subsidy to such ventures would be a positive stimulus to the development of live writing. Where is it likely to come from in Canada?

The distribution of writing through libraries and broadcasting was another aspect of the general theme to which the Conference directed its attention. The dismal situation of Canadian libraries has already been indicated. Not a single province in Canada, Hilton Smith said, achieves a reasonable *minimum* standard. In 1954 we spent $8,000,000 on a service that needed at least $22 million to keep it healthy and $30 million to make it strong. There are 57 library books in Canada for every 100 people, and, excluding larger cities, for over 80 per cent of rural Canada there is one book for every nine people. Yet this is the

Canada that boasts of its growing strength and new importance in the international community. Small comfort was found in the fact that the libraries do find some improvement in the demand for books by Canadians.

The part that radio and TV programmes may play was discussed by Robert Weaver of the CBC. Radio has already given new encouragement to Canadian writers through such programmes as Critically Speaking (on which the Conference itself was discussed), Wednesday Night, and Anthology. For the first time the reading of Canadian poems to the public by poets has been made possible. Poetry as a spoken art is well advanced in England and the United States, with gramophone records as well as with public readings, but is only beginning in Canada. Many university libraries in the United States have special Poetry Rooms where the latest poetry books and records are available in surroundings conducive to reading and listening. Appreciation was expressed of the work CBC is doing, and there were many demands that it should do even more than at present. Of particular interest to writers was Mr. Weaver's belief that radio, and probably also TV, is beginning to create specialized "publics" rather than one great mass public, and as this occurs programmes devoted to more experimental literature become more possible to maintain. Following Mr. Weaver's talk it was pointed out that the fate of radio as a distributor of literary works was bound up with the fate of CBC in Canada as a public service run by the state, and that if the present attacks upon it by interests primarily concerned in selling commodities is successful, there is little hope of maintaining it as a promoter of Canadian cultural activities. The likelihood of automobile manufacturers or soap producers sponsoring readings of Canadian poetry, or of poets accepting such sponsorship, was not considered great.

Before the Conference adjourned, some feeling was expressed that so unique a gathering should not disband without making a public statement upon certain of the conclusions at which it had arrived. This request presented obvious difficulties for a conference that had no organized existence, had never met before, and would probably never meet again, and in which no attempt had been made to divide into majority and minority points of view. Nevertheless a committee met to consider what might be included in a consensus of opinion, and as a result seven resolutions were adopted, in the following form:

1. The Conference heard with interest of the increasing emphasis being placed on the study of Canadian literature in our schools and urges all

provinces to give an even more prominent place to Canadian literature in the school curricula and text books. In the opinion of the Conference it is essential to familiarize Canadian children with the best of Canadian writing, past and present, if we are to develop a discriminating Canadian public for a significant national literature.

2. The Conference believes that the quality of Canadian literature now justifies and requires that Canadian colleges and universities include more of this literature in English courses, particularly in freshman survey courses which are so often the only English courses taken by students specializing in other disciplines.

3. The Conference, recognizing the important part played by libraries in the distribution of the Canadian writer's work and in the general dissemination of culture, urges the provincial governments to continue and enlarge their support of public libraries to the end that all Canadians may have access to books.

4. The Conference believes that to establish a continuing literary tradition in Canada significant works by Canadians must be kept in print and if necessary republished in inexpensive editions for use both by students and by general readers. When the Canada Council is established the preservation of these works should be considered and if necessary the republication should be subsidized by the Council after the Australian practice.

5. The Conference recognizes that Canadian writers have been encouraged and assisted by the establishment of literary fellowships and scholarships now being administered by the Royal Society of Canada. These fellowships and scholarships do much to provide opportunities for fruitful work that in the commercial limitation of our small market might otherwise wait for years for publication or possibly be lost entirely. The Conference hopes that this programme can be increased, preferably doubled, in the very near future.

6. The Conference recommends that the Governor-General's Awards carry with them substantial cash payments.

7. The Conference recommends that the Canadian Government increase its purchases of new Canadian writing for distribution among its Embassies and Consulates throughout the world.

These resolutions deal with only a few of the matters that were discussed. Primarily the purpose of the Conference was exploratory, and its programme covered a wide field. The emphasis in the resolutions on practical steps to improve the lot of the Canadian writer indicates that out of the frank exchange of views among all kinds of persons interested in the serious business of writing there emerged these obvious lines along which positive action could be recommended.

There were some unavoidable omissions in the membership of the Conference. In the first place, no French-Canadian writers were present. Their absence was not due to a failure to invite, but to an inability of those invited to attend, even though the Conference was not attempting to discuss the problems that face the Canadian author who writes in

French. Hence only very brief mention was made of the important question of the role of translation in a bilingual country; this would be a fitting topic for another conference. Then there were some notable absences, again due to inability to attend, among both poets and fiction writers, such as Pratt, Finch, LePan, MacLennan, Raddall, Davies, Wilson, as well as among critics like Frye and McLuhan. Arrangements for the Conference had to be made rather late in the spring when many individuals had made other plans. Again, playwrights, script writers, and others not directly writing for book publication were not included unless they represented critics, editors, or some other category. Simple reasons of size and cost imposed necessary limitations. It is doubtful, however, if a larger conference would have improved the quality of discussion.

This Conference was an experiment. It showed that there is a very live and vigorous spirit among Canadian writers, that they receive mutual stimulation and encouragement from being able to meet together, and that the exchange of views with the publishers and distributors made clear to both groups many problems and opportunities not hitherto understood. It showed also that there is the same sense of community here as elsewhere in Canada; though divided geographically, the writers talked, argued, and discussed as though they belonged to a single group having common interests and problems. It seems we do not yet have regional as well as national writing, speaking only for English Canada. Indeed, with a few exceptions, the writers all came from the five cities of Vancouver, Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, and Fredericton. It was evident that this sense of community would be strengthened greatly were further opportunities available for joint discussions of common problems in the future.

Review*

M. St. A. Woodside

Friedrich von Schlegel is reported to have said, "Every man finds in the ancients what he needs or wants, and above all, himself." This is presumably an exaggerated way of stating that it is impossible to write purely objective history; that the student of the past in greater or less measure inevitably imposes upon it something of himself and something of the age in which he lives. The past is dead. It survives only in "historical evidence"—in documents, memoirs, objects in museums and art galleries, and other dumb and scrappy material, and it becomes a living process or an exciting panorama only when the historian infuses into it the breath of life. But the most the historian can do is to give his reader an account of his own experience in considering the evidence, and consequently the only life which the historian can lend to the evidence is his own life, conditioned as it must be by the age and the society in which he lives. If there is agreement among historians, it must be due to the fact that all of them begin with the same evidence and perhaps, in some measure, to whatever truth there is in the remark of Sir Max Beerbohm that "History doesn't repeat itself; historians merely repeat one another"; if there is disagreement, it is due (provided that evidence has not been overlooked and that the historians are reasonably competent) to the fact that history must be studied and written by individuals. In many cases where two competent historians disagree, the experience of one with the evidence is merely different from that of the other; the conclusions of both, as competent historians, may be valid.

Toynbee has with his monumental *Study of History* evoked criticism, friendly or hostile, from a majority of professional historians partly because of his methods, partly because of his interpretations both of specific short passages of history and of the whole. The critics have been stimulating to serious readers of Toynbee's *Study* and no doubt they have been stimulating to Toynbee himself. At any rate he has taken the opportunity represented by the section of volume IX entitled "Law and Freedom in History" to attempt to answer some of the criticism. Nevertheless, if the first paragraph of this review has any cogency, Toynbee cannot be convicted of being *wrong* unless he can be convicted of overlooking evidence or making dishonest use of it. The fact that his interpretations and conclusions differ from those of other competent scholars can *prove* nothing except that the doctors disagree.

It is in the highly important matter of familiarity with "historical evi-

*Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vols. VII, VIII, IX, X. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1954. Pp. xxxii, 772; x, 732; viii, 759; viii, 442. $32.00 per set.

dence"—a knowledge of which is absolutely indispensable to the would-be historian—that Toynbee is most vulnerable. His method, by now so familiar as to require no detailed description, is to analyse human history into twenty-one civilizations, plus some doubtful or imperfect examples of the species, to regard them as "philosophically contemporary," and by comparing them to attempt to induce social "laws" (the inverted commas are Toynbee's) applicable to civilizations, and in particular to the births, growths, breakdowns, and disintegrations of civilizations. Toynbee thus essays not to write a chronological narrative but to understand and to analyse, and finally to make a synthesis of, the whole of human history since the times when in different areas of the world different societies ceased to be "primitive" and became "civilized." He has taken the world and approximately six millennia of time for his parish. It would be quite obvious even without the bibliographies in the *Study*'s foot-notes that Toynbee as an individual human being could not possibly be familiar with all the original "historical evidence." While he is thoroughly at home with the evidence for some areas of history (the Hellenic civilization is the best but not the only example), he is cut off by barriers of language and of lack of time from the evidence for other areas, and has been obliged to come in contact with that evidence at one or more removes through books and monographs written by others. Toynbee is himself conscious of this weakness in his position. He defends it by saying, in so many words, that in view of the improbability of historical omniscience being possessed by any human, the task which he has undertaken must be assumed without omniscience or not at all. He has been eminently fair. Specific references in foot-notes and frequent and lengthy quotations in the text of the *Study* acquaint readers at every stage with the "secondary sources" which have been employed.

Specialists in this or that period of history complain freely and sometimes bitterly that Toynbee when he enters their special field of study makes egregious errors of judgment. In some cases this may be a result of Toynbee's lack of familiarity with the "original sources" for that particular area and his reliance on "secondary sources" which, scholarly and eminent though they may be, are not accepted by the authors of complaint. In other cases it is undoubtedly due to the scope of Toynbee's work. A farmer who has diligently cultivated one hundred acres of land for a life-time may well have a totally different view of the area from that of an aviator who surveys it from a height of three miles; a map of the world may be quite valid and useful even though it may give an abbreviated and hence, in a sense, false account of one particular county in one particular country. Toynbee has attempted to produce an historical map of the world. It may have large as well as small inaccuracies—inaccuracies which will be diminished by future surveys. But whether accurate or inaccurate, it must often fail to satisfy those who have spent their lives in mapping, on a large and detailed scale, some comparatively small province.

Many critics are worried by the fact that Toynbee has been able to detect a "pattern" in human history. The pattern to which they refer is, of course, the pattern of twenty-one civilizations each with a beginning, a middle, and,

except for a small minority, an end. Toynbee, it is said, has developed his pattern in the Hellenic civilization or somewhere else and has *imposed* the pattern on the other civilizations. Any sympathetic reader of Toynbee's *Study* will be impressed by the care which he has taken to avoid the imposition of a pattern on history. The exceptions, even in small details, are carefully noted. There are cases where by a very slight forcing of the interpretation a greater measure of uniformity could be obtained, e.g., the Minoan civilization which could, with very little manipulation, have been "apparented" to the Hellenic. One suspects that Toynbee's pattern is objected to because it disrupts a pattern which has without conscious recognition been imposed on history by many other modern historians. The multitude of national histories which have been published in recent times indicates that a national pattern has been imposed on history and that the national state, as Toynbee has vigorously pointed out, has come to be regarded as the proper field of historical study. It may be that one of Toynbee's great services to historiography is the breaking of old and sometimes unrecognized patterns such as that of national states or of the linear development (Palestine, Greece, Rome, the West), divided arbitrarily into ancient, mediaeval, and modern segments, which has been sarcastically referred to by Spengler as a tape-worm.

May blinkers profitably be put on Clio? Some critics declare, "Whatever Toynbee is writing, it is not history"; others say, "He is a logical positivist; the methods of the physical sciences are not valid in the realm of history in any degree whatsoever"; still others maintain, "Toynbee is too much concerned with matters which are not the concern of historians at all but rather of theologians." But why should the vision of historians be arbitrarily restricted? Why should sectors of the arc of vision which, it could be argued, really belong to historians be reserved for the social scientists or scholars in other disciplines? Can historians, without damage to their own work, surrender economic history, social history, history of religion, *Kunstgeschichte*, and so on, to others and content themselves with political and military history? Are their own methods so perfect that they can learn nothing from the newer methods of the social scientists and the age-old methods of the poets? It is salutary to remember that Herodotus, the "father of history," used myth and anecdote to promote an understanding of historical events and that his interpretation of history was fundamentally theological. He imposed no narrow limits on his work or on his methods, for the word which he used of his endeavours—our word "history"—meant in his day "research," without qualification. Thucydides, Herodotus' successor, was caught in the rapidly developing scientific movements of his day and tended to exploit scientific method in his magnificent history. Yet when he came to deal with the Athenian *débâcle* in Sicily he employed—unconsciously, it seems—the framework of Greek tragedy, with its theological foundations. There seems to have developed a disposition to fetter history, to say that this method is proper and that method improper, to limit history within arbitrarily fixed boundaries. Toynbee has broken through such restrictions. He has exploited scientific method without using it exclusively and with a

sensitive regard to its limitations. He has employed myth and fable. He has sought help from the insight of the poet, as frequent reference to Lucretius and Goethe, for example, show. In short, he has rejected no aids at all which will deepen his insight and understanding and broaden his appreciation of history. And if he has interpreted man's social development in theological terms, he has only exercised, in a way thoroughly proper to any historian, his curiosity about the meaning of history—about the nature and destiny of man. Perhaps there is a need to re-define the purpose of history rather than to accuse Toynbee of sinning against artificial canons. The time may well have come when Clio, thanks to new methods and new disciplines, is able to widen her vision and sharpen her perception.

In many respects Toynbee is a true son of the mid-twentieth century. Like Thucydides he has been influenced by the rapid and profound scientific developments of his age, but, like Thucydides again, he has not been bemused into rejecting older means of obtaining historical wisdom. Toynbee has thought and written in an age which is conscious of "one world" spatially and politically. As an historian Toynbee has discovered an historical oecumenicity, both temporal and spatial. Among contemporaries who are rapidly and in increasing numbers experiencing doubt about the assurance and the promise of the secular, Toynbee has interpreted the march of man as a journey towards the City of God. The attention which he has evoked from professional historians and from laymen, particularly from the latter, would appear to indicate that he is by no means out of tune with his age.

Volumes VII-X of the great *Study* are in a real sense large appendices to the first six volumes, expanding ideas which have been developed in the earlier portions of his work. Among the most interesting parts of them are large autobiographical sections which permit us glimpses into the mind and into the workshop of the author himself. The section which has attracted the most attention, for obvious reasons, "The Prospects of Western Civilization," is possibly the least important part of the whole work. Toynbee remarks that the future is not a legitimate concern of an historian (however tempting it may be to him) and confesses that he approaches this section of his self-appointed task with some distaste. In carrying out the task Toynbee has exhibited the rather conservative good sense characteristic of the annual *Survey of International Affairs* rather than the radicalism which some critics impute to him. In general, readers will find volumes VII to X somewhat heavier than volumes I to VI. The reasons for this are clear. To cite only one, there is a noticeable tendency to pile up adjectives and the semi-technical terms developed by the author in earlier volumes before the qualified nouns. This may be due to the desire to refer back, by means of the adjective, to previous arguments, and thus to produce clarity, but the effect is nevertheless one of heaviness.

Toynbee's *Study of History* has been patronized by *Time* and by *Life*. It has been accorded the typical mid-twentieth century honour of a "digest." It has been parodied in *Punch*. All of this would suggest that the *Study* has made an impact on people of our day. No doubt Ph.D. dissertations on the *Study* will shortly be appearing. Toynbee has "broken the cake of custom,"

to use one of his own frequently cited quotations. Right or wrong, he has been extremely interesting and stimulating. And it is to be hoped that after analysis and criticism have completed their valuable and necessary work, and the time is ripe for another synthesis, there will be available an historian of Toynbee's scholarship, insight, imagination, and grace to undertake the task.

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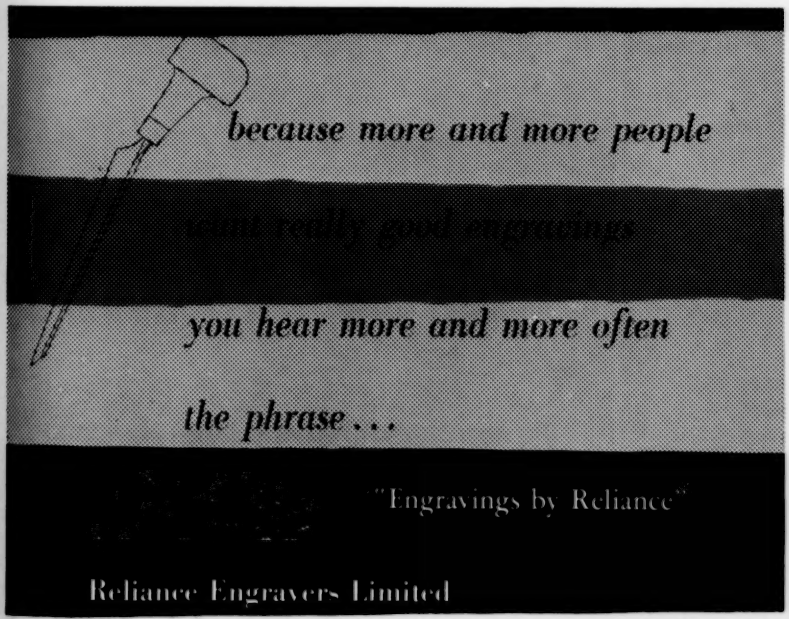
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